EXHIBIT F

Pew Research Center

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Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side

Americans are as likely to often turn to independent channels as they are to established news organization channels; videos from independent news producers are more likely to cover subjects negatively, discuss conspiracy theories

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Terminology [FORMAT AS DROPDOWN BOX W/LINK]

This study explores the landscape of news on YouTube through a survey of YouTube news consumers alongside an analysis of the most popular YouTube channels that produce news and the videos published by a subset of these channels. Here are some definitions of key terms used throughout this report:

- **YouTube news consumers:** Those who said they get news from YouTube in a Pew Research Center survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
- **YouTube channel:** A webpage on youtube.com where a specific video creator's videos are organized. For example, Pew Research Center's YouTube videos are all found on this page. The channel owner can control what information is on the page, including the description of the channel and which videos are featured.
- **Popular YouTube news channels:** These are the 377 YouTube channels with at least 100,000 subscribers which dedicated a majority of their 15 most recent videos in November 2019 to news or current affairs as determined by a set of trained human coders. These channels were selected after examining over 17,000 channels that were recommended by YouTube's algorithm after viewing a video from a shorter list of known news channels.
- **Most viewed YouTube news channels:** These are the 100 popular YouTube news channels with the highest number of views on their median video from December 2019 (while news channels were initially selected based on November data, they were included in the "most viewed" sample based on December data, and only videos from December were analyzed in Chapter 2). A representative sample of 2,967 videos from these channels was analyzed.
- **Channel affiliation:** This is the external organization, agency or group that a news channel is connected with. Many channels are the YouTube home for an entity that has a significant presence outside the platform. For instance, Pew Research Center's YouTube page is the Center's home on YouTube. Each popular YouTube news channel was examined for affiliation.
- **News organization channels:** These are news channels that are affiliated with an external news organization, such as the YouTube page for CNN or Fox News.
- **Other organization channels:** These are news channels with an external affiliation that is not a news organization. Examples of other organizations include research organizations, advocacy groups and government agencies.
- **Independent channels:** These are news channels that do not have a clear external affiliation.

- **Personality-driven channels:** These are news channels that feature a recurring host and orient their channel's content around the host's personality, such as the channel for The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. These channels can be associated with a news organization, another organization or be independent.
- **Public figure channels:** These are personality-driven channels hosted by individuals who had a public profile *before* they created a YouTube channel. Public figure channels may be affiliated with an external organization. Examples include Bill O'Reilly and Last Week Tonight with John Oliver.
- **YouTuber channel:** These are personality-driven channels hosted by individuals who did not have a public profile before they created a YouTube channel (although many are in the public eye now). YouTuber channels generally are not affiliated with an external organization. Examples include Philip DeFranco and Secular Talk.
- **Video topic:** The primary topic that a video was about, based on the issues that were discussed in its first 10 minutes (or if the video is shorter than 10 minutes, the entire video).
- **Video focus:** The person, organization or entity that a video focused on the most during its first 10 minutes. This is different than the video's topic. For example, a video about the topic of impeachment may focus on Trump, congressional Republicans, Democrats or other figures entirely. All videos have a main topic, but not all videos have a focus.
- **Video tone:** The balance of positive and negative statements about the video focus in the first 10 minutes of the video. Videos were considered to have a negative tone if at least twice as many negative statements as positive ones were made about the primary person or group being discussed during the video's first 10 minutes, and vice versa for a positive tone. All other videos were coded as neither positive nor negative (sometimes referred to as "mixed").

For more on the survey and how popular Youtube news channels or the videos from the most viewed YouTube news channels were analyzed, please refer to the methodology [LINK].

How we did this

This study explores the news landscape on YouTube using a multi-method approach. Chapter 1 of this report analyzes data from a representative survey of U.S. adults. Chapter 2 examines news content on YouTube through a study of the most popular news channels and a sample of the news videos published by a subset of these channels in December 2019.

Survey

The survey portion of this analysis uses data from a survey of 12,638 U.S. adults conducted from Jan. 6-20, 2020. Everyone who completed the survey is a member of Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This way nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The surveys are weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the ATP's methodology here [LINK].

Content analysis

Findings about YouTube news channels come from an analysis of over 17,000 channels in November 2019. Researchers collected and filtered these channels using a multistage process. First, researchers used a Python script to visit an initial set of 145 channels – some associated with news outlets, and others with independent sources that have been highlighted in previous Center reports. Using the YouTube recommendation algorithm, researchers then identified over 17,000 additional channels with 100,000 subscribers that could potentially produce news content. These channels were then evaluated by a team of trained human coders in November 2019 to determine if at least half of their 15 most recent videos were about news and current affairs. A total of 377 channels met these criteria and were further analyzed for a number of characteristics, including whether they are affiliatied with a news organization, how they present their ideology and the extent to which they offer opportunities for their fans to contribute money. These channels are referred to in this study as "popular YouTube news channels."

An additional analysis was conducted on the videos produced by the 100 of these channels that had a broad national audience and the highest median number of views on their videos in December 2019 (referred to here as the "most viewed YouTube news channels"). A team of trained human coders watched the first 10 minutes (or the full video, if shorter than 10 minutes) of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 in order to analyze each video's topic, the primary person or group that the video focused on, its tone (positive, negative or no clear tone), and more.

For more details, see the methodology. [LINK]

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Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side

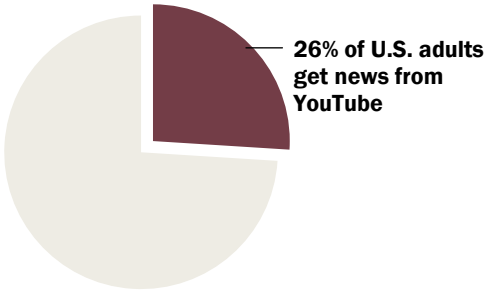
Americans are as likely to often turn to independent channels as they are to established news organization channels; videos from independent news producers are more likely to cover subjects negatively, discuss conspiracy theories

Most Americans use YouTube, the massive, Google-owned video-sharing website where users can find and watch content on almost anything, from dancing cats to popular music to instructions on how to build a house.

YouTube also has become an important source of news for many Americans. About a quarter of all U.S. adults (26%) say they get news on YouTube. And while relatively few of these people say it is their primary news source, most say it is an important way they stay informed.

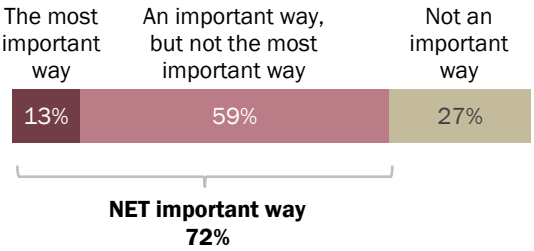
This raises the question: What kind of news are Americans getting on YouTube, and who are they getting it from? A new Pew Research Center study explores these questions in two ways: through a **survey, conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020, among 12,638 U.S. adults** that asked YouTube news consumers about their experiences on the website; and through an **analysis of the most popular YouTube news channels and the contents of the videos published by a subset of these channels in December 2019**. For the content analysis, researchers used a combination of computational methods and trained human

About a quarter of U.S. adults get news from YouTube ...



... and YouTube is an important way to get news for most who get news there

% of YouTube news consumers who say YouTube is ___ they keep up with news



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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coders to identify the most popular YouTube news channels and comb through thousands of hours of videos looking for their topic, tone and other attributes (see Chapter 2 and the Methodology for details).

[DROPDOWN BOX] Pew Research Center's previous work on YouTube

This study continues Pew Research Center's analysis of Americans' attitudes toward news on social media as well as the Center's focused examination of the content on YouTube and how Americans use it. For a selection of further research, see:

YouTube

- 10 facts about Americans and YouTube
- A Week in the Life of Popular YouTube Channels
- Many Turn to YouTube for Children's Content, News, How-To Lessons

Social media generally

- Americans Who Mainly Get Their News on Social Media Are Less Engaged, Less Knowledgeable
- Most Americans Think Social Media Sites Censor Political Viewpoints
- As COVID-19 Emerged in U.S., Facebook Posts About It Appeared in Wide Range of Public Pages, Groups
- Americans are Wary of the Role Social Media Sites Play in Delivering the News

[END BOX]

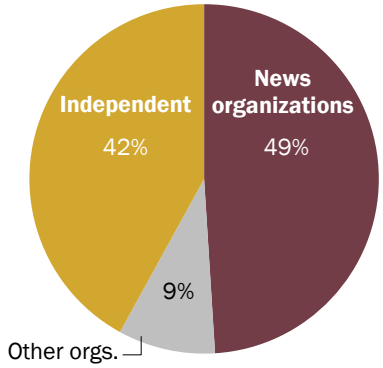
The study finds a news landscape on YouTube in which established news organizations and independent news creators thrive side by side – and consequently, one where established news organizations no longer have full control over the news Americans watch.

Indeed, the survey finds that most YouTube news consumers say they at least sometimes turn to news organizations as well as independent channels for news on the platform, and identical shares (23% each) *often* turn to each type of source. (Channels associated with news organizations are either the official channel of a news outlet, like CNN or Fox News, or one that features a particular program, show or journalist from these outlets. Independent channels do not have a clear affiliation with any external entity.)

The content analysis confirms that both of these channel types play prominent roles in the YouTube media ecosystem. The 377 most popular YouTube news channels are largely a mix of established news organizations (49%) and independent channels (42%), with the rest

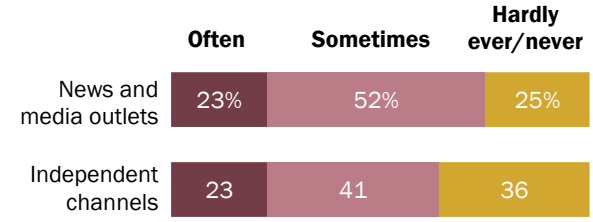
YouTube news channels are a mix of independent channels and those affiliated with external news outlets ...

% of popular YouTube news channels that have each affiliation type



... and both types of channels are popular with YouTube news consumers

% of YouTube news consumers who say they often, sometimes or hardly ever/never get news from ___ on YouTube



Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that was not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation. Survey respondents were asked only about news organization and independent channels (for exact question wording see topline). Respondents who did not answer survey question not shown.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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associated with other types of organizations (9%).[1]

There are several key differences between the content found on independent and established news organization channels. For instance, during the period analyzed (December 2019), news organizations posted a much higher volume of videos than independent sources (33 vs. 12 for the typical channel of each type), while independent channels' videos were typically much longer (more than 12 minutes, compared with about five minutes for videos from channels affiliated with news organizations).

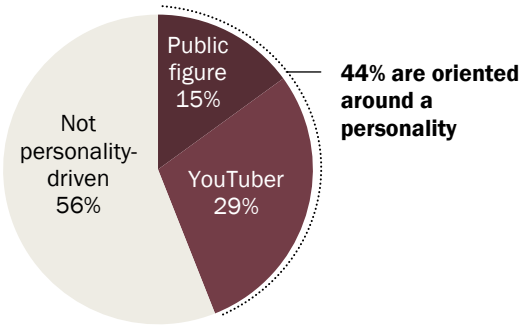
[1] Because channels affiliated with other organizations were a relatively small portion of all channels, much of the analysis focuses on the differences between channels affiliated with news organizations and independent channels.

The content analysis also finds that most of these independent channels are centered around an individual personality – often somebody who built their following through their YouTube channel – rather than a structured organization.

While 22% of popular YouTube news channels affiliated with a news organization use this personality-driven structure, seven-in-ten of the most popular independent news channels are oriented around a personality. And the people at the center of most of these independent channels are often "YouTubers" (i.e., people who gained a following through their YouTube presence; 57% of all independent news channels) rather than people who were public figures before gaining attention on YouTube (13%).[2]

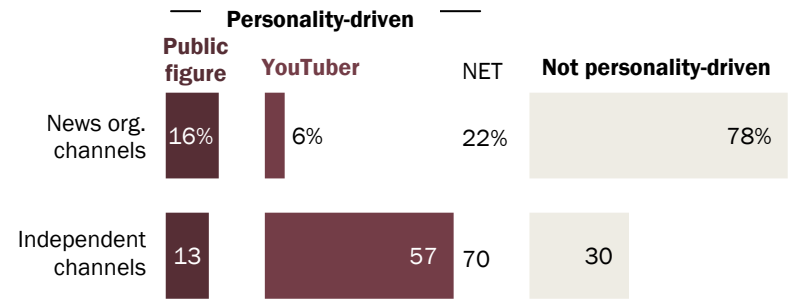
Just under half of the most popular YouTube news channels are oriented around a specific personality ...

% of popular YouTube news channels that are oriented around a ...



... with independent channels especially likely to use this model

% of popular YouTube news channels in each affiliation type that are oriented around a ...



Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019.
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These different offerings and approaches to the news could have a variety of implications for the experiences of people who get news on YouTube. On the one hand, most YouTube news consumers seem to have a positive experience. Clear majorities in this group say in the survey that the news videos they watch on YouTube help them better understand current events (66%) and expect them to be largely accurate (73%). And a similar share (68%) say

[2] Researchers determined if an individual was a public figure by conducting online searches on their background before they started a YouTube channel.

the videos keep their attention and that they typically watch closely, rather than playing them in the background.

Not only that, but when YouTube news consumers were asked to describe in their own words why YouTube is a unique place to get news, the most common responses relate to the content itself – including access to news sources outside the mainstream and the plethora of different opinions and views that are available on the platform. Indeed, YouTube news viewers are about as likely to say they are primarily looking for opinions and commentary on the website (51%) as they are to say they are mostly seeking information and facts (i.e., “straight” reporting; 48%).

Few YouTube news consumers see very big problems with getting news from the site

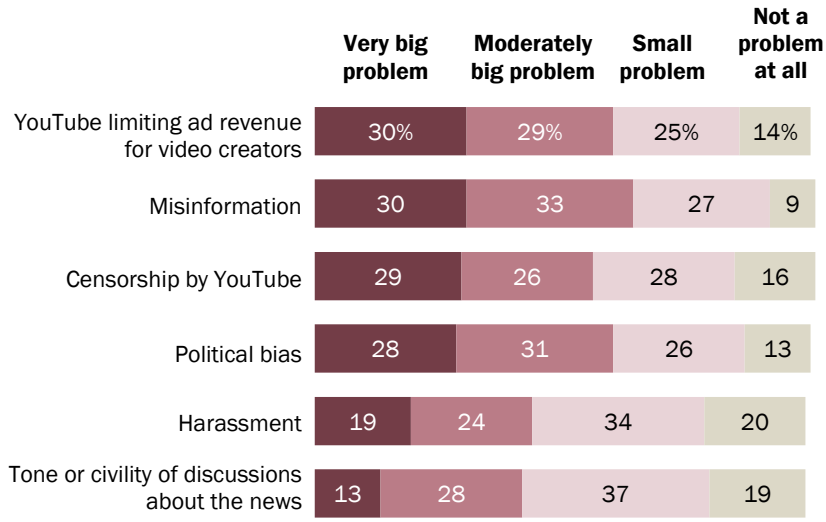
YouTube news viewers recognize that the platform is not without problems, but few find these problems to be very big. Critics and observers have raised a number of concerns about news on YouTube, ranging from misinformation and political bias to the control YouTube has over its content creators, both in terms of their content itself and their financial relationship with the website.

The survey asked YouTube news consumers about these issues, among others. While no more than three-in-ten say any of these are "very big" problems, majorities say a few of these are at least "moderately big" problems, including misinformation, political bias, YouTube limiting advertising revenue for video creators (also known as demonetization), and censorship by YouTube.

Fewer say that harassment or a lack of civility are very big problems when it comes to news on YouTube, but still at least four-in-ten say these are moderately big problems.

Most YouTube news consumers do not see very big problems with getting news from the site

% of YouTube news consumers who say each issue is a _____ when it comes to news on YouTube



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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Republicans and Republican-leaning independents are more likely than Democrats and independents who lean Democratic to say censorship, demonetization and political bias are very big problems. Democrats, meanwhile, are more likely than Republicans to say misinformation and harassment are very big problems.

Independent news channels more likely to focus on conspiracy theories, cover subjects negatively

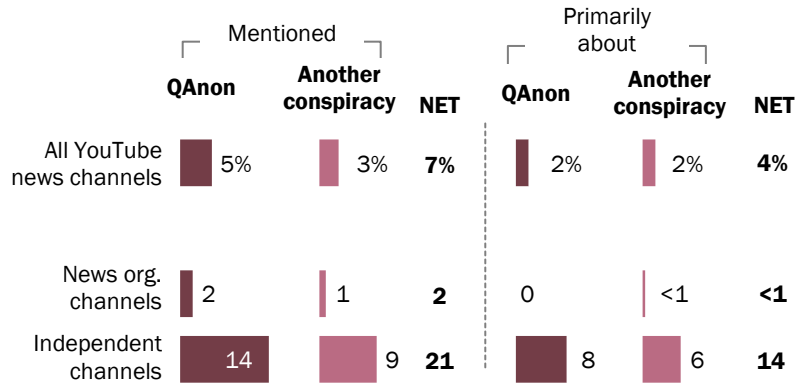
The content analysis suggests that some of these problems may be particularly big concerns when it comes to videos produced by *independent* YouTube news channels rather than those affiliated with news organizations.

For instance, coverage of conspiracy theories was almost entirely concentrated among videos from independent channels and virtually absent from videos produced by channels affiliated with news organizations.

To determine the rate at which conspiracy theories were discussed, researchers analyzed videos to determine the extent to which they covered specific unproven claims or conspiracy theories that were prominent in news media in late 2019, particularly QAnon/deep state conspiracy theories, theories related to Jeffrey Epstein, and anti-vaccine theories.

Independent YouTube channels covered QAnon conspiracy theories much more frequently than news organizations

% of videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels from December 2019 that mentioned or primarily were about ...



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Videos may mention more than one conspiracy, but can only be primarily about one topic. Channels affiliated with other organizations (aside from news organizations) produced just 2% of videos, which was not enough to analyze separately.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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Analysis of nearly 3,000 videos posted by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels in December 2019 finds that 4% of all videos were primarily about the conspiracy theories studied. But when looking only at videos from independent channels, 14% were primarily about one of these conspiracy theories, and an even higher share (21%) at least mentioned one of these conspiracy theories. In contrast, just 2% of videos from news organizations mentioned at least one of the conspiracy theories studied and less than 1% were primarily about one.

Of these conspiracy theories, the ones collectively known as QAnon were the most commonly mentioned; 8% of videos from independent channels focused primarily on QAnon theories and 14% mentioned them, compared with news organization channels, which mentioned them in 2% of videos (and didn't publish any videos that were primarily about them). Previous research has found that about half of U.S. adults (47%) say they have heard at least a little about the QAnon conspiracy theories.

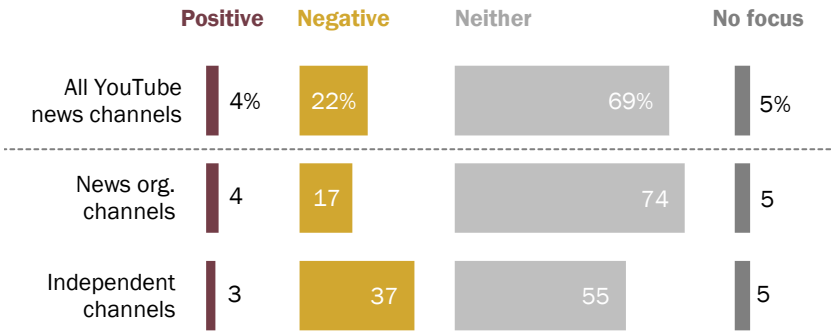
In addition to being more likely to cover conspiracy theories, independent channels were more likely to produce videos with a negative stance toward their subject.

While watching the videos from the top 100 most viewed YouTube news channels in December of last year, researchers assessed whether the tone of each video was primarily positive or negative toward the person or group it addressed. Overall, videos were more likely to have a negative evaluation of the person or group the video discussed than a positive one (22% vs. 4%), although most videos (69%) were neither overwhelmingly positive nor negative (see the methodology [LINK] for details on how videos were coded).

But negativity was notably more common in videos from independent channels – 37% of the videos produced by independent channels were negative, compared with 17% of videos from news organizations.

Independent YouTube channels about twice as likely as news organizations to produce videos with a negative tone

% of videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels from December 2019 that had a ___ tone toward the main person or group they addressed



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Videos coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative videos had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other videos are coded as neither. Channels affiliated with other organizations (aside from news organizations) produced 2% of videos, which was not enough to analyze separately.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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Moreover, negative videos were especially popular, drawing more views on average than other videos. Across all different types of channels, videos that were predominantly negative in tone received an average of 184,000 views, compared with 172,000 views for videos with a mixed or neutral tone and 117,000 for positive videos.

Donald Trump on YouTube: Videos about the president made up the biggest chunk of news videos and were viewed by more people

The examination of videos also highlights the important role that President Donald Trump played in news videos in December 2019: Videos that discussed topics related to his presidency or focused on him more generally received far more views than other videos.

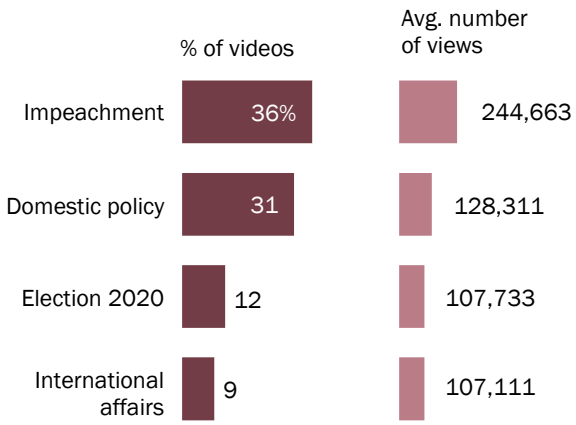
The 2,967 videos that were examined were all posted in December 2019, during which time the U.S. House of Representatives voted to impeach Trump on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. In this context, impeachment was the most common topic of videos posted by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels during this time.

At the same time, however, the 2020 election, which at that point was largely centered around the race for the Democratic nomination, was featured much less frequently. Despite several months of Democratic debates – including one during December 2019 – just 12% of videos were about the election. This is a third of the proportion of videos that were about the impeachment.

Other common topics included a range of domestic policy areas (31% of videos), including abortion, gun control, immigration and international affairs (9%).

During December 2019, about a third of YouTube news videos were about Trump's impeachment

% and average views of videos from December 2019 from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels about each topic



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Topics above 5% shown; see detailed tables for all 10 topics analyzed.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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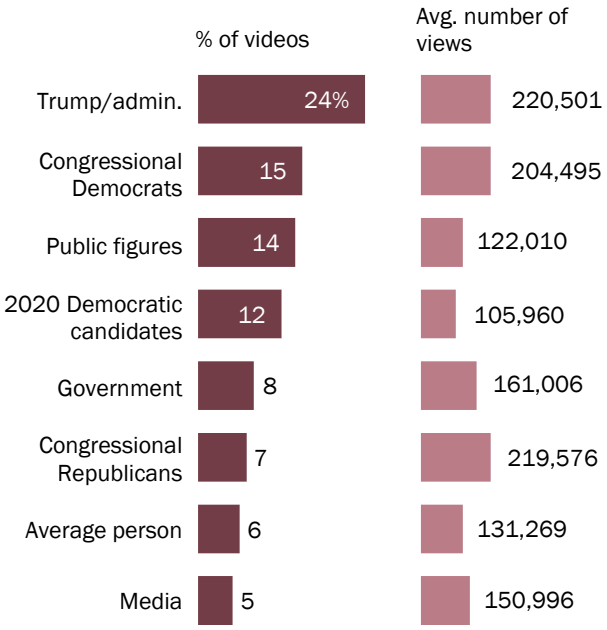
The president's presence showed up in other ways as well. For instance, more videos focused on Trump than any other person or group across all videos in December 2019 – no matter the topic (while topic refers to the primary story being discussed, focus describes the person or group the video is about; e.g., a video could be about impeachment but be focused on the president or Congressional Democrats). About a quarter (24%) of all videos studied focused on Trump or his administration, with the impeachment inquiry being the most common topic of those discussions.

And this also shows up in how popular videos are: Simply put, videos that featured the president got more views than others. Videos that were primarily about Trump's impeachment or Trump's administration averaged 245,000 and 257,000 views, respectively, while those about other topics averaged 122,000 views. And no matter what the topic, when Trump himself was the main focus of a video, those videos received 221,000 views on average, compared with 157,000 among all other videos.

About a quarter of all YouTube news videos studied focused on Trump

% and average views of videos from December 2019 from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels that focused on ...



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Congressional Democrats/Republicans may include other party members. Categories are mutually exclusive. Only individuals or groups focused on in at least 5% of videos shown; see detailed tables for all focus areas analyzed.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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The president's prominence in these videos also appears to shape what viewers take away from them. In an open-ended question, the survey asked what political or social issue YouTube news consumers learned the most about from watching YouTube news in the year before the survey (which was conducted in January 2020), and a third mentioned Trump or his administration – more than any other category.

Other key findings from the study include:

- Amid a debate about whether YouTube is an engine for political "radicalization," the study finds that about half of YouTube news consumers describe the overall body of news videos

about politics and social issues on the website as moderate. About a third (32%) see them as liberal and a smaller portion (14%) view them as conservative. When it comes to social media more broadly, about half of Americans (48%) say the news posts they see there are mostly liberal, according to previous research.

- An examination of the most popular YouTube news channels shows that the vast majority do not clearly state a political ideology on their channel page – regardless of whether the contents of their videos take an ideological slant. Only 12% of popular YouTube news channels explicitly include language about their ideology in the channel description, with slightly more identifying as right-leaning (8%) than left-leaning (4%). Independent news channels, however, are somewhat more likely than news organization channels to describe themselves in partisan terms and are more likely to say they lean right.

- Media and politicians were the most common sources cited in YouTube news videos. About half of all videos analyzed cited the news media as a source of information (51%), and a slightly smaller portion of videos (42%) cited a prominent Republican or Democrat, including Trump, the 2020 Democratic presidential candidates, or members of Congress.[3] News organization channels were much more likely than independent channels to cite politicians (49% of videos from news organizations vs. 25% of videos from independent channels), while independent channels were more likely to cite the news media (68% vs. 45%).

- Independent channels are far more likely than news organizations to raise funds through their channels (71% vs. 14%). Overall, about four-in-ten of the most popular YouTube news channels (41%) accept donations through a variety of methods – most commonly Patreon, a site where fans can support creators financially.

The rest of this report looks at these and other findings in greater detail. Chapter 1 [LINK] focuses on the findings from the survey of YouTube news consumers conducted in January 2020, while Chapter 2 [LINK] examines the results from the analysis of the most popular YouTube news channels and the videos posted to the top 100 most viewed channels in December 2019.

[3] This only includes external media citations. For example, a video produced by NBC that cited another NBC clip or statements from their own reporters was not counted, but if an NBC video cited a CBS clip it would be.

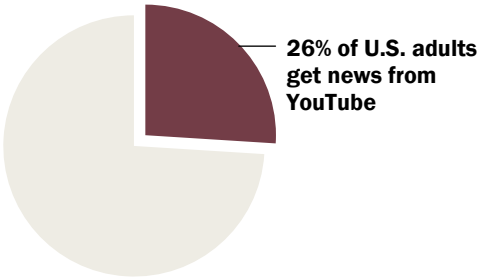
1. YouTube news consumers about as likely to use the site for opinions as for facts

YouTube is one of the most popular online platforms in the United States. About seven-in-ten Americans (71%) say they use it, including roughly a quarter of all U.S. adults (26%) who get news there.[4] The video-sharing site has become a place for journalists, commentators, news organizations, and others to publish a wide range of content, and Americans who get news on YouTube are about evenly divided between those who say they go there primarily to get opinions and social commentary (51%) and those who are seeking information and facts (48%).

YouTube news consumers – who are younger, more likely to be male and more racially diverse than U.S. adults overall – say that the news they find there is generally informative and that they expect it to be accurate. Two-thirds (66%) say the site's news videos have helped them better understand current events, and about three-quarters (73%) expect the information they get from the site's news videos to be largely accurate.

A previous Pew Research Center study found that far fewer social media news consumers (40%) expect news on social media to be accurate. But here, in the context of a specific brand, YouTube gets higher marks from its base of news consumers. Among U.S. adults overall, a separate survey found that while more people distrust than trust YouTube as a source for political and election news, the level of skepticism is not quite as high as for some other social media sites.

About a quarter of U.S. adults use YouTube to get news ...



... and YouTube news consumers are about evenly split between those seeking opinions, facts

% of YouTube news consumers who go to YouTube news videos primarily for ...

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
"Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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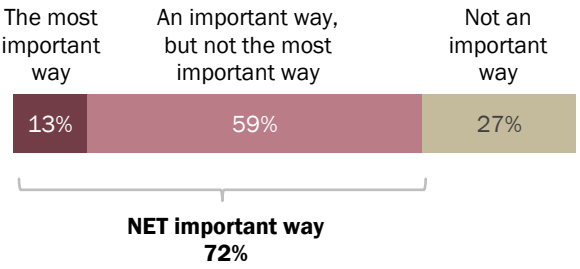
[4] This survey did not distinguish between the video sharing platform called YouTube and the more recently launched television streaming service called YouTubeTV.

Most YouTube news consumers say the site is an important way they get news, but relatively few (13%) say that it is their *most* important source of news. Those who say it is the most important way they get news differ from others in several ways. They are more likely to go directly to YouTube for news rather than clicking through links found on other platforms, and they are more likely to seek out information and facts on YouTube rather than opinion and social commentary. They also express more loyalty to particular channels, programs or YouTube personalities.

Most YouTube news consumers say the site is an important way they get news, but not the most important

% of YouTube news consumers who say YouTube is ___ they keep up with news



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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On the whole, however, YouTube news consumers are not particularly loyal to any channels or personalities, and they are equally likely to get news from YouTube channels owned by news and media outlets as they are from independent channels that are not affiliated with a news outlet.[5] About a quarter of YouTube news consumers (23%) say they "often" get news on YouTube from news outlets, such as Fox News and CNN, while an identical share (23%) often get news from independent video producers, such as Philip DeFranco, Secular Talk or Right Side Broadcasting Network.

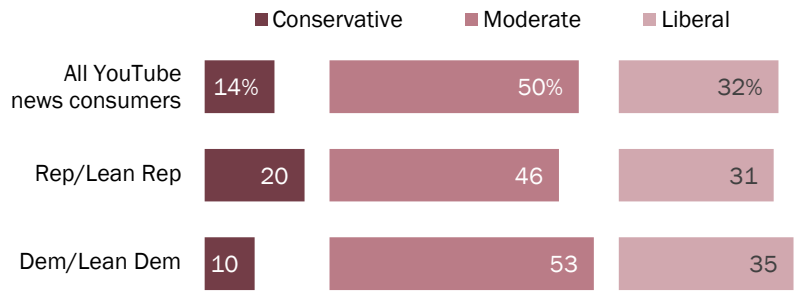
YouTube has made some recent policy changes in response to criticism about harassment and other issues, but its news consumers don't see many major problems on the site. No more than three-in-ten say misinformation, censorship or demonetization (YouTube limiting ad revenue for video creators) are very big problems, and just 19% say the same about harassment. In previous Center research on social media and news, at least half of U.S. adults said one-sided and inaccurate news were very big problems for social media more broadly.

[5] The item wording in the survey was "YouTubers not affiliated with a news outlet."

Amid a debate about whether YouTube is an engine for political "radicalization," YouTube news consumers don't seem to see it as particularly polarizing. Half of those who get news from YouTube see news videos about politics and social issues as generally moderate, while about a third (32%) see them as liberal-leaning and a smaller portion (14%) view them as generally conservative. When it comes to social media more broadly, social media news consumers say the news posts they see there are generally liberal, according to previous Center research.

Half of YouTube news consumers say the news they see in YouTube videos is politically moderate

% of YouTube news consumers who say YouTube videos about politics and social issues are generally ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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There are small partisan differences to note. For instance, among YouTube news consumers, Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats to say the news videos they see on politics and social issues on YouTube lean conservative (20% vs. 10%). But the highest share in both groups say the news videos they see are politically moderate.

The rest of this chapter examines findings from a January 2020 survey of Americans who get news on YouTube in more detail.

YouTube news consumers are more likely to be young, male than U.S. adults overall

Who are the Americans who get news on YouTube? Compared with U.S. adults overall, they are more likely to be young and male, and less likely to be White.

About a third of adult YouTube news consumers are under the age of 30 (34%), compared with 21% of all adults. And about seven-in-ten (71%) are under 50, compared with slightly more than half of the total adult population (55%).

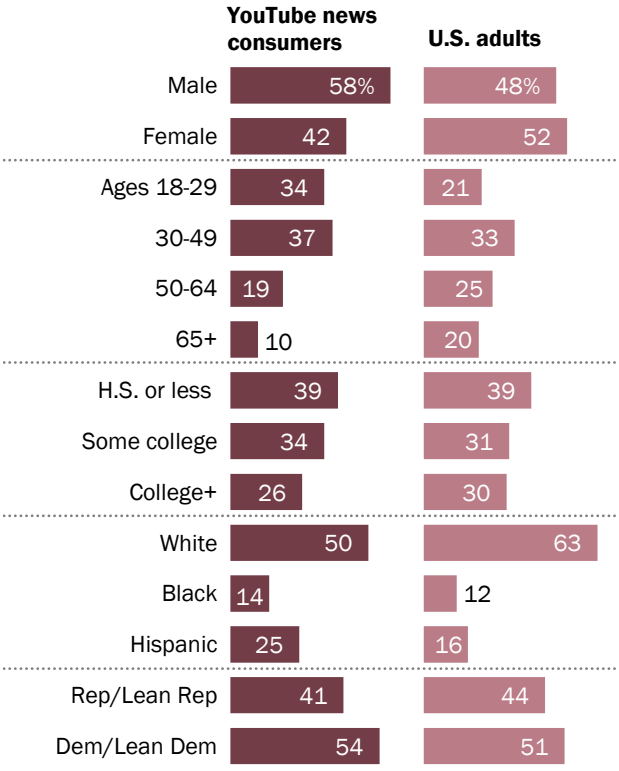
YouTube news consumers also are more likely to be male (58%) than U.S. adults overall (48%).

YouTube news consumers are also more racially diverse. Half are White (50%), while 14% are Black and 25% are Hispanic. In contrast, 63% of U.S. adults are White, 12% are Black and 16% are Hispanic.

There are minimal differences between YouTube news consumers and the general adult population in education or political party identification.

YouTube news consumers are disproportionately more likely to be young, male

% of __ who are ...



Note: White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Partisanship identification for all U.S. adults are Pew Research Center estimates.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020, and U.S. Census Bureau 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Public Use Microdata Sample file.
"Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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How Americans get news on YouTube: Most go directly to the site, pay close attention to what they are watching

There are many different ways to get news on YouTube. News consumers can go directly to one source, ignoring the site's other offerings. They could search for news or browse the site, possibly through YouTube's news section. They could follow YouTube's algorithm and watch videos that are recommended based on their previous selections, or could even get news through YouTube videos embedded in websites or social media posts without ever visiting the site or app itself. The survey shows that some behaviors are dominant but that consumers arrive at news on YouTube through a variety of paths.

How YouTube news consumers use the site

% of YouTube news consumers who ...

65% get news videos by **going directly to the YouTube app or website** rather than watching videos or following links shared on other platforms

68% say they **pay close attention** to news videos that they are watching, rather than playing them in the background

54% say they **hardly ever or never interact** with the news videos they watch

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
"Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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A majority of YouTube news consumers (65%) say they get news videos by going directly to the site. The remainder (34%) find them indirectly, either by watching videos or following links that have been shared with them on other platforms, like Facebook or email.[6]

When they start watching a video – no matter how they got there – most YouTube news consumers say they pay attention to what they are watching: 68% say they generally pay close attention to news videos while they're playing, while about three-in-ten (31%) mostly let them play in the background.

Few say they often interact with YouTube news videos by liking, commenting, subscribing or sharing: Only 14% of YouTube news consumers say they do so often, while 31% say they sometimes do this and fully 54% say they hardly ever or never do.

[6] Since this is a survey, it would not include those who watch YouTube videos indirectly without realizing they are watching a YouTube video and so do not account for it in their response.

Neither loyalty nor recommendations drive how YouTube news consumers find news there

Discovering news on YouTube can be a somewhat scattershot experience. Most YouTube news consumers don't see themselves as particularly loyal to any YouTube channels, shows or personalities, and around four-in-ten (39%) say they pay a lot of attention to who created news videos. Meanwhile, nearly eight-in-ten (78%) rely on the YouTube algorithm's recommended news videos at least occasionally.

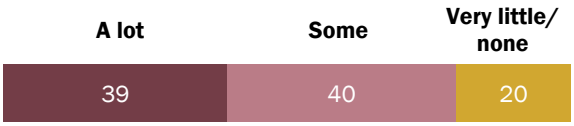
About four-in-ten (38%) say they consider themselves loyal to a few shows, people or channels on YouTube, while about six-in-ten (61%) do not. Previous Center research about Americans' news habits more broadly has found that a similar share of U.S. adults (63%) say they're not particularly loyal to the sources they get news from.

Fewer than half of YouTube news consumers say they are loyal to a few shows, people or channels ...

% of YouTube news consumers who say they are ...

... and a similar share say they pay a lot of attention to who created the news videos they watch on YouTube

% of YouTube news consumers who say they pay ___ attention to who created the news videos they watch on YouTube ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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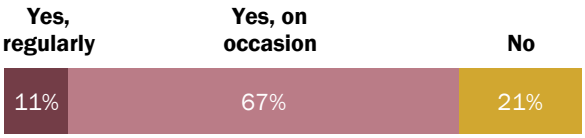
The data shows a similar portion of YouTube news consumers pay close attention to who created the news videos. About four-in-ten (39%) say they pay "a lot" of attention to who created the news videos they watch, while a further 40% pay "some" attention, with only one-in-five saying they pay very little or no attention. This is similar to previous Center research about social media in general, which found that 38% of social media news consumers said they pay a lot of attention to the source of news articles they find on a social networking site.

As a feature of the site, YouTube provides its users links to additional videos on topics similar to the videos they just watched – and these recommendations are widely used by news consumers. Nearly eight-in-ten YouTube news consumers (78%) report using these recommendations at least occasionally, although just about one-in-ten (11%) say they "regularly" watch the news videos recommended to them by YouTube. About one-in-five (21%) say they never do this.

Most YouTube news consumers say the site does a good job recommending videos for them, including 13% who say YouTube does a "very good" job recommending videos and an additional 66% who say the recommendations are "somewhat good." Far fewer (19%) say YouTube does a "somewhat" or "very" bad job recommending news videos for them.

Most YouTube news consumers occasionally watch the news videos recommended by the site's algorithm ...

% of YouTube news consumers who say they watch the recommended news videos that appear alongside the video they are watching ...



... and say the recommendations are at least somewhat good

% of YouTube news consumers who say YouTube does a ____ job recommending news videos for them

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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When getting news on YouTube, Americans use media outlets and independent channels at similar rates

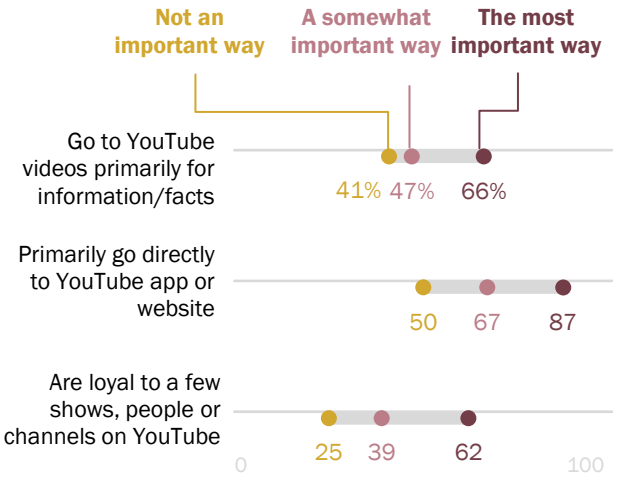
While most YouTube news consumers say the site is *an* important way they get news, only a small share say it is the *most* important way, as discussed previously. But YouTube news consumers who say it is the most important way they get news stand out from other YouTube news consumers in several ways.

For example, those who say YouTube is the most important way they get news are much more likely than other YouTube news consumers to use the site for facts and information rather than for opinion and commentary. Two-thirds (66%) in this group say they watch YouTube news videos for information and facts, higher than the share among those who say YouTube is a somewhat important way (47%) or not an important way (41%) they get news.

Those who say YouTube is the most important way they get news also are much more likely to go directly to YouTube (87%) rather than following links or watching videos on other platforms – notably higher than the share who do this among those who say YouTube is a somewhat important (67%) or not important (50%) way they get news.

YouTube news consumers who rely heavily on the site for news more likely to go there for facts than opinions

Among YouTube news consumers who say YouTube is ___ they keep up with news, % who ...



Note: Those who say it is an important way, but not the most important way, are classified as "somewhat important way." Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
"Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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And roughly six-in-ten YouTube news consumers who say the site is their most crucial news source (62%) are loyal to a few shows, people, or channels on YouTube, compared with much smaller shares among those who ascribe less importance to YouTube in their overall news diet.

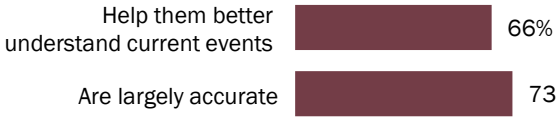
YouTube news consumers give the site positive evaluations, seeing few major problems with the news they get there

YouTube news consumers say they generally find news videos on the site useful and informative. Two-thirds (66%) say the site's news videos have helped them better understand current events, while only a very small share (4%) say the videos left them more confused.

In addition, about three-quarters (73%) say that they expect the information they get from the site's news videos to be largely accurate.

News videos on YouTube are helpful, largely accurate, according to those who get news there

% of YouTube news consumers who say news videos on the site ...



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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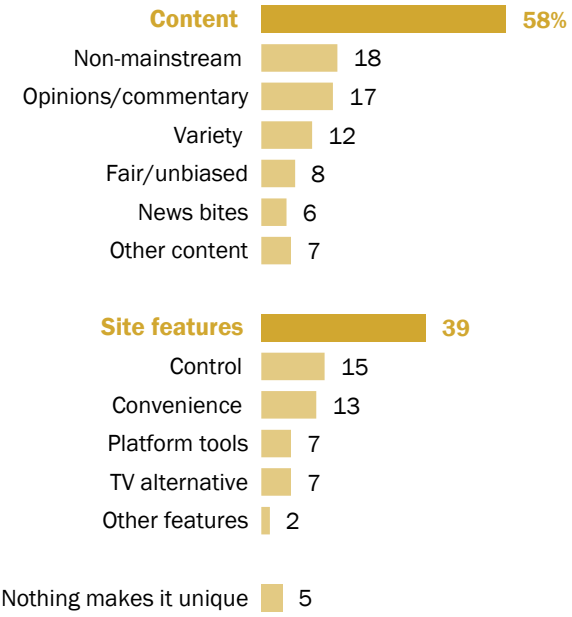
Respondents who use YouTube for news were asked to describe, in their own words, why they think the site is a unique way to get news. Grouping all the open-ended responses into two broad categories, of those YouTube news consumers who gave an answer, more point to the types of content available rather than the features of the website (58% vs. 39%; 73% of all YouTube news consumers gave an answer).

Access to sources outside the mainstream (18% of those who gave a response) and commentary and opinions (17%) are two of the main reasons why YouTube's news content stands out, according to respondents. Meanwhile, the most commonly cited website features that make YouTube unique include the control YouTube gives them over what they watch to tailor it to their personal interests (15%) and the convenience or ease of use of the platform (13%).

Among those who gave an answer, 5% explicitly said they could not think of any reason why YouTube is a unique place to get news.

YouTube news consumers say access to sources outside the mainstream, commentary make YouTube news unique

Of respondents who provided a response to an open-ended question, % who say ____ is why YouTube is a unique place to get news



Note: Based on those who said they get news from YouTube and who provided a response to an open-ended question about why YouTube is a unique place to get news. 73% of YouTube news consumers provided an answer. "Nothing makes it unique" includes "don't know" responses. The first three claims mentioned were coded into categories. Figures add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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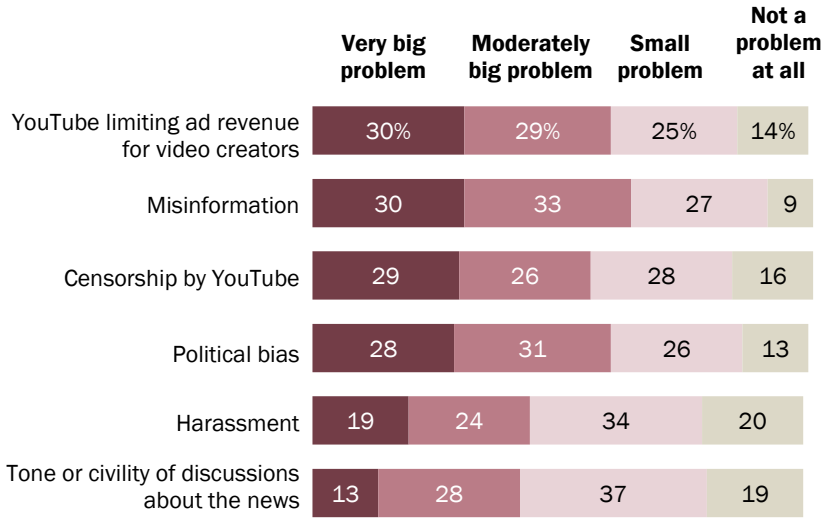
The survey also asked about six different possible issues with YouTube that have been raised by critics, ranging from misinformation and political extremism to YouTube's control over ad revenue and content. Of the six, none were rated a "very big problem" by more than three-in-ten YouTube news consumers, although majorities say a few of these are at least "moderately big" problems.

Most YouTube news consumers do not see major problems with getting news from the site

% of YouTube news consumers who say each issue is a _____ when it comes to news on YouTube



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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These include demonetization – i.e., when YouTube intentionally limits advertising revenue for video creators – misinformation, censorship, and political bias. Each of these issues is rated as a very big problem by roughly three-in-ten YouTube news consumers, while similar shares say each is a moderate problem. Fewer say that either harassment (19%) or the tone of discussions about the news (13%) is a major problem on YouTube.

Those who often get news on YouTube from independent news channels are more likely than other YouTube news consumers to see two YouTube policies as major problems: demonetization (51%) and content moderation, which some view as censorship (44%).

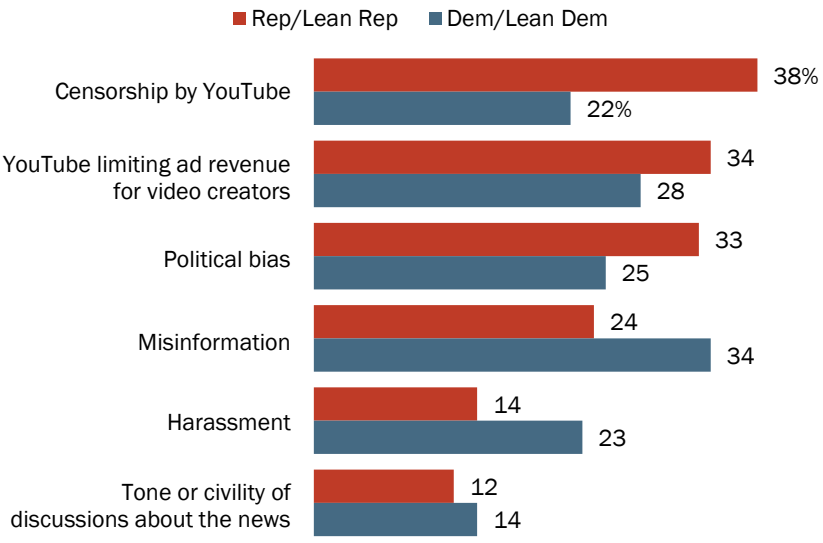
There are some partisan differences in what YouTube news consumers see as problems with news on the site.

Republicans and independents who lean Republican are considerably more likely than Democrats (and Democratic-leaning independents) to see censorship by YouTube as a very big problem (38% vs. 22%). Republicans also are somewhat more likely than Democrats to see demonetization (34% vs. 28%) and political bias (33% vs. 25%) as very big problems.

Meanwhile, Democrats are more concerned than Republicans about two other problems: misinformation (34% of Democrats say this is a very big problem, vs. 24% of Republicans) and harassment (23% vs. 14%).

Partisan differences on whether censorship, misinformation, harassment are very big problems with news on YouTube

% of YouTube news consumers who say ___ is a very big problem when it comes to news on YouTube



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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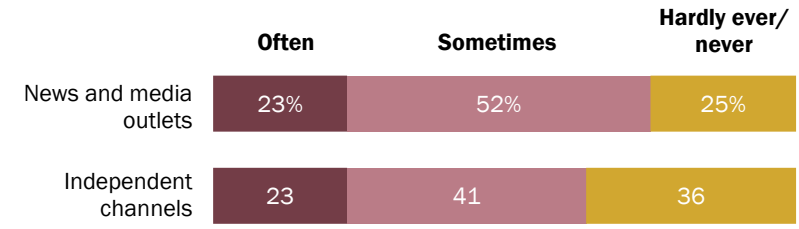
Among YouTube news consumers, relatively few in both parties see the tone or civility of discussions about the news on YouTube as a very big problem.

When getting news on YouTube, Americans often turn to media outlets and independent channels at similar rates

Americans who get news on YouTube have a variety of different sources to choose from on the site, from news organizations posting TV clips to commentators who've risen to fame via their YouTube videos. Overall, YouTube news consumers are as likely to say they "often" get news on the site from news and media outlets as they are to say the same about channels that aren't affiliated with a news outlet.

YouTube news consumers are equally likely to often get news on the site from news outlets, independent channels

% of YouTube news consumers who say they often, sometimes or hardly ever/never get news from ___ on YouTube



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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About one-in-five YouTube news consumers (23%) say they often get news from news and media outlets on YouTube, such as the Fox News or CNN channels. The same portion (23%) often get news from independent channels. And YouTube news consumers are more likely to say they "sometimes" get news from media outlets on YouTube than they are to say they sometimes turn to independent channels (52% vs. 41%).

Those in the youngest age group – 18- to 29-year-olds – are more likely to get news from independent channels than adults in older age groups. About three-in-ten younger adults (31%) do so often, compared with about one-in-five or fewer among the older age groups. There are no notable differences across the age groups in how often people get news on YouTube from news and media outlets.

YouTube news consumers learned the most about Trump administration, impeachment from watching YouTube news videos

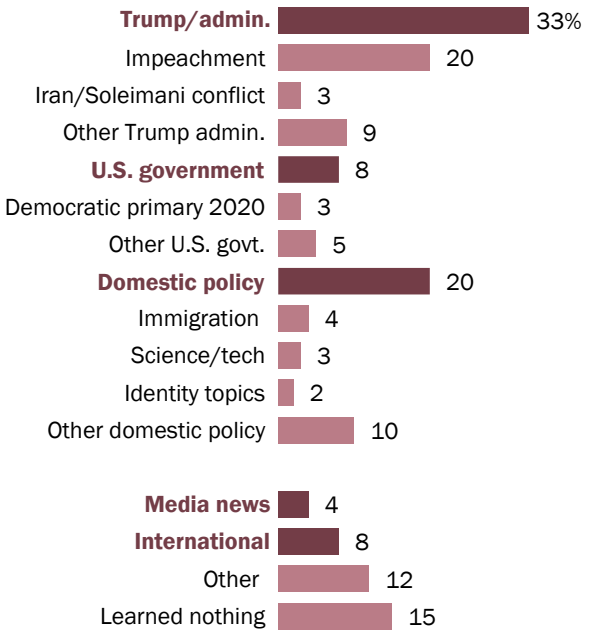
Respondents who use YouTube for news were asked to describe in their own words what news topic they learned the most about from YouTube in the year before the survey was conducted in January 2020.

The most common topics named involved the Trump administration, including 20% who said they learned the most on YouTube about impeachment. (When the survey was fielded, the Senate was about to begin its trial.) An additional 13% named other topics related to President Trump or his administration.

Beyond impeachment, responses varied widely, with many pertaining to the U.S. government or domestic policy. No more than 4% of respondents named any particular issue within these broader categories, with the most common responses involving immigration, the 2020 Democratic primaries, or science and technology.

Impeachment and Trump administration most common topics that YouTube news consumers learned the most about

Of respondents who provided a political or social issue they have learned the most about from YouTube in 2019, % who said it was about ...



Note: Based on those who said they get news from YouTube and who provided a political or social issue they learned the most about from YouTube news videos in the year prior to when the survey was conducted. 65% of all YouTube news consumers provided an answer. "Learned nothing" includes "don't know" responses. Only responses given by 2% or more of respondents shown. The first claim mentioned was coded.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 6-20, 2020.
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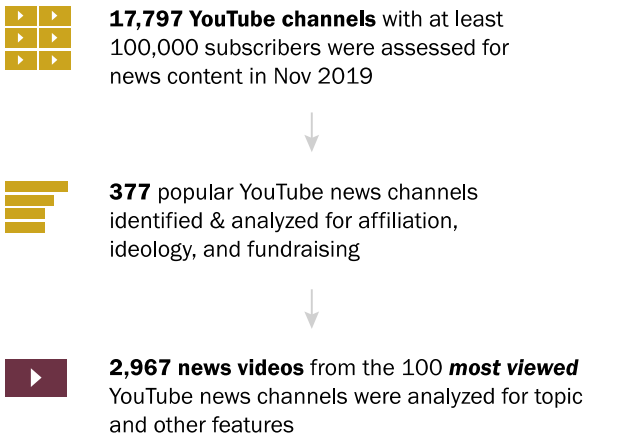
2. A closer look at the channels producing news on YouTube – and the videos themselves

Complementing the survey results in the previous chapter, this section of the report is based on a different approach to data collection. Rather than asking people about their experiences with news on YouTube, researchers used both computational tools and human coders to examine some of the attributes of the most popular YouTube news channels and the content of the videos they publish.

The first part of this analysis looks at **377 YouTube channels** that frequently cover news and current affairs and that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019.[7] Channels were selected using a recommendation analysis similar to the process used in previous Pew Research Center research on YouTube (see the methodology for more details [LINK]). These channels are referred to as "popular YouTube news channels" in this report, and were examined for external affiliation, the presence of a host, ideology and other characteristics.

The second part of the analysis looks at the videos published by a subset of those channels in order to get a sense of the type of news actually watched by the largest numbers of YouTube news consumers. To narrow the list of channels to a manageable number for the small group of human coders who watched the videos and categorized them, the analysis includes only the 100 channels with the highest views on their median video published in December 2019. Nearly **3,000 videos** (2,967) published by these channels in December 2019 were examined by the coders for the topics and tone contained within them, among other attributes.

How Pew Research Center studied YouTube news channels



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019 and analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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The two analyses find that YouTube's platform is a diverse news environment that provides space for independent news creators to thrive alongside more traditional news organizations, and that the content on these different types of channels varies in important ways. For instance,

[7] Channels must have 100,000 subscribers to be offered perks like verification.

independent channels are more likely to be centered around a specific personality – often someone who had no public profile before gaining attention on YouTube – and more likely to seek donations directly from viewers. In addition, in December 2019, independent channels were collectively more likely than channels associated with news organizations to mention or focus on conspiracy theories and to take a negative tone toward the main subjects of their videos.

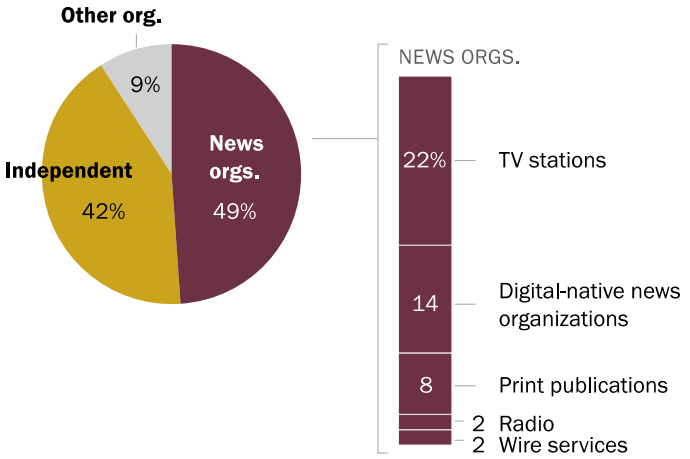
The rest of this chapter explains these and other patterns in more detail.

Examining popular YouTube news channels: News on YouTube comes from a mix of news organizations and independent channels

About half (49%) of the 377 most popular YouTube news channels are affiliated with a news organization. For example, these could be the official channel of a news outlet, a channel focused on a particular program or show from that outlet, or a channel featuring associated journalists or anchors.

News on YouTube comes from a mix of established news organizations and independent channels

% of popular YouTube news channels that have each affiliation type



Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that was not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019.
"Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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The largest chunk of these news organization channels (22% of all popular YouTube news channels) are associated with TV stations, including both broadcast and cable outlets and shows they produce. These include national outlets like CNN, Fox News or NBC News, as well as local outlets from across the country, such as CBS News Los Angeles and WXYZ-TV Detroit. This group also includes television shows with news content, such as The Daily Show, The View, and Last Week Tonight, as well as a small number of foreign outlets that produce English-language news, like the BBC.

Channels associated with digital-native news outlets such as BuzzFeed News, The Daily Wire or Vox, as well as those affiliated with print newspapers and magazines (including The New York Times, The Economist and USA Today), also are common among the most popular YouTube news channels (14% of channels are affiliated with digital-native news outlets and 8% are affiliated with print outlets). Fewer popular YouTube news channels are owned by radio stations like NPR or wire services such as The Associated Press.

Popular YouTube news channels that are not affiliated with established news organizations fall into one of two other categories. About one-in-ten channels (9%) are affiliated with other types of organizations, such as government entities or research and advocacy organizations.

But a large share of channels (42%) do not have a clear affiliation with any external entity, referred to throughout this chapter as "independent channels." In many cases, these are video creators who have established a following based primarily on their YouTube presence, such as Diamond and Silk or The Humanist Report.

These different types of channels seem to adopt different strategies in what kinds of videos they publish and how often they do so. The typical (median) news organization channel produced 33 videos in December 2019, with a median video length of about five minutes. These were often – especially for television outlets – short segments about a specific topic, repackaged from another source. In contrast, the typical independent channel produced far fewer (12) videos, but they were typically much longer, with a median video length of over 12 minutes.

The survey component of this report found that YouTube news consumers are equally likely to get news from independent YouTube channels as they are to get news from news organizations, with 23% saying they often get news from each type of source (see Chapter 1) [LINK].

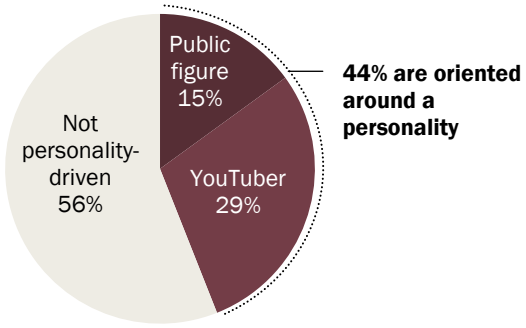
About four-in-ten popular YouTube news channels – including most independent channels – are oriented around an individual, often who made their name on YouTube

Outside of external affiliation, another way to look at YouTube news channels is to see whether a channel is oriented around an individual – a characteristic especially common to independent channels. In this type of channel, an individual – whether a journalist employed by a news organization or an independent host – puts their personality at the center of the channel and its content. These channels feature the same host, identifiable in all or most of the videos. In the most common video format, the host speaks directly to the camera about their views on a specific issue or event happening in the news. The authenticity of their videos is one of the draws of the channel, much like a blog in the 2000s and 2010s.

Just under half of the most popular YouTube news channels (44%) use this model, referred to here as "personality-driven channels."

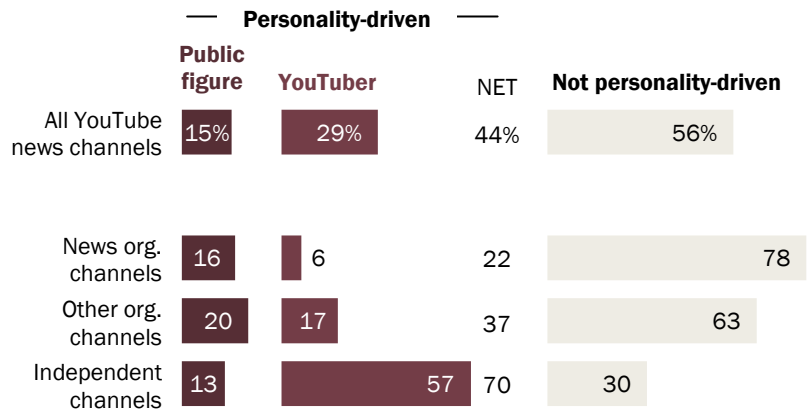
More than four-in-ten popular YouTube news channels are oriented around a specific personality ...

% of popular YouTube news channels that are oriented around a ...



... with independent channels especially likely to use this model

% of popular YouTube news channels in each affiliation type that are oriented around a ...



Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019.
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Some of these (15% of all popular YouTube news channels) are hosted by someone who was a public figure before starting a

YouTube channel (researchers determined if an individual was a public figure by conducting Google searches on their background before they started a YouTube channel). These include entertainment stars who regularly address the news in their YouTube content, such as Bill Maher or John Oliver, as well as public intellectuals like Sam Harris and independent journalists like Tim Pool.

But social media sites like YouTube are not solely a platform for people who are already public figures. Indeed, YouTube has launched the careers of many influencers, artists and musicians – and discussing news on YouTube can also be an avenue to popularity.

About three-in-ten of the most popular YouTube news channels (29%) are hosted by an individual who built their following through their YouTube channel, a group this study refers to as "YouTubers." This group is distinct from public figures simply in that any notoriety they have attanined has come after starting a YouTube channel, not before. YouTubers include hosts who talk about a range of issues and current events, like Philip DeFranco, as well as more politically oriented channels, such as Secular Talk or Mark Dice. Importantly, while many of these individuals have built a career off of their work, some have drawn significant negative attention. For instance, some of these channels are hosted by controversial figures, including some run by individuals with ties to racist groups. (Some of these channels, included among the most popular YouTube news channels as of November 2019, have since been banned by YouTube.) And YouTube has often tried to rein in this controversy through video takedowns and demonetization, leading to discrimination lawsuits from YouTubers across the political spectrum.

There is a close link between personality-driven channels – particularly those featuring YouTubers – and independent channels. Indeed, seven-in-ten of the most popular independent YouTube news channels are oriented around a personality, including 57% hosted by YouTubers (compared with just 13% hosted by public figures).

This balance is unique to independent channels. Much smaller proportions of other types of channels are personality-driven. About one-in-five channels affiliated with news organizations (22%) are oriented around an individual, typically the host of a television or radio show like Huckabee or Tom Hartmann. And just 6% of news organization channels are hosted by YouTubers. A somewhat higher share of channels associated with other types of organizations (37%) are oriented around an individual (frequently academics or other prominent researchers), but still, most are not.

Few popular YouTube news channels express an ideological lean on their channel page

Some observers have cited examples and raised concerns that political discussion on YouTube may be ideological, if not extreme. However, an examination of the channel pages of the most popular YouTube news channels reveals that most do not describe themselves in partisan or ideological terms. In fact, just 12% of popular YouTube news channels claim some kind of partisan or ideological lean in their channel title or description, although this does not necessarily line up with the content of their videos.[8]

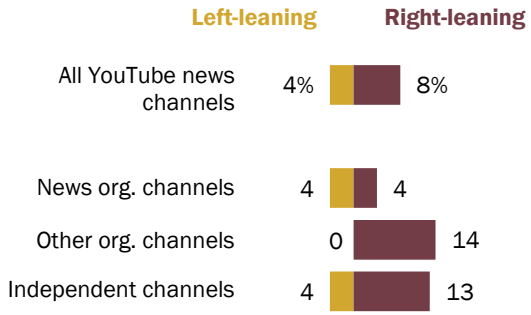
Among those popular YouTube news channels that do claim an ideological label, right-leaning channels are twice as common as left-leaning ones (8% vs. 4% of all channels), although neither group is comprised of more than a handful of channels. Right-leaning channels are defined as those that describe themselves as Republican, conservative or pro-Trump in their channel title or description, while left-leaning channels indicate they are liberal, progressive or Democratic.

Conversely, according to the the survey, YouTube news consumers are more likely to say YouTube videos about politics and social issues lean liberal (32%) rather than conservative (14%), although half say that they are generally moderate (see Chapter 1).

An overwhelming majority of YouTube news channels do not describe themselves in ideological terms

% of popular YouTube news channels that indicated they are ___ in their description or title

12% of YouTube news channels describe their ideology on their channel page



Note: Ideological lean was determined by an examination of the channel's title, description and about page. Only channels that explicitly state they are left-leaning (liberal, progressive or Democratic) or right-leaning (conservative, Republican or pro-Trump) are included in each respective ideology. Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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Channels owned by news organizations are the least likely to express an ideological orientation – just 8% of these channels do so, split evenly between those that lean left and right. By contrast,

[8] This analysis looked for clear ideological statements on the channel's page, including title and description. It therefore does not include any statements within any videos.

nearly one-in-five independent channels (17%) express a clear partisan lean, with 13% indicating they lean right and 4% leaning left.

A similar proportion of channels affiliated with other organizations (14%) express an ideological orientation, with all of these being right-leaning. Among the 377 most popular YouTube news channels, however, just five fit this description.

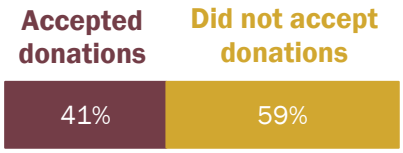
About four-in-ten popular YouTube news channels accepted donations

YouTube channel owners have multiple revenue streams available to help offset the costs of running a channel. One income source for popular channels can be revenue sharing from the advertisements that YouTube runs alongside the video itself. But this revenue source is dependent on YouTube, which has adopted policies to restrict access to funding for channels that violate their rules, including briefly excluding ads from channels that made videos about the coronavirus outbreak.

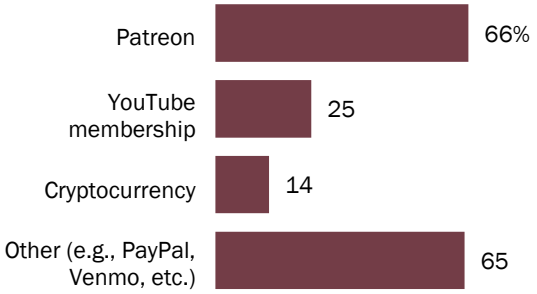
Given the complexities of revenue sharing, many channel owners have adopted alternate income sources, one of which is donations. This analysis finds that 41% of popular YouTube news channels turn to their viewers for donations – especially independent channels.

About four-in-ten popular YouTube news channels ask their viewers for donations

% of popular YouTube news channels that ___ on their channel



Among popular YouTube news channels that ask for donations, % that accept donations via ...



Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. Many channels accept donations via multiple methods.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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YouTube channel owners have a number of options for donations, and many channels accept donations through multiple avenues. Patreon is the most common, used by 66% of popular YouTube news channels that accept donations, followed by YouTube's own donation service (used by 25%). Another 14% of the channels studied that accept donations do so through Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. Meanwhile, about two-thirds (65%) of the channels that accept donations use at least one of several other platforms, such as GoFundMe or PayPal. Many services – particularly Patreon and YouTube – feature a subscription option in which users can donate to the channel each month, providing a consistent revenue stream for these channels.

Additionally, roughly three-quarters of popular YouTube news channels that accept donations (74%) provide some kind of benefit to those who donate. These benefits often include access to exclusive videos or digital stickers and badges the donator can use in comments.

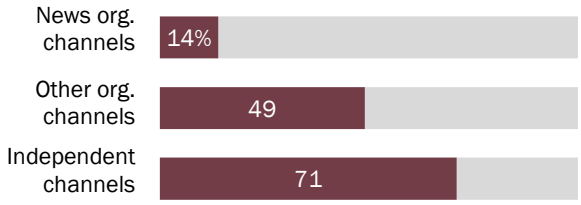
Beyond direct fundraising, many channels also raise funds through merchandise sales. About one-in-five (22%) popular YouTube news channels sell some kind of merchandise (such as coffee mugs or T-shirts) on their YouTube page.

Independent news channels are far more likely than those affiliated with news organizations to accept donations (71% vs. 14%). Channels affiliated with other types of organizations fall in between, with about half (49%) accepting these funds. Similarly, nearly four-in-ten independent channels (37%) sell merchandise, compared with just one-in-ten news organization channels.

Roughly six-in-ten (61%) personality-driven channels accept donations, though this is far more common for channels centered around YouTubers (78%) – personalities who rose to prominence through their YouTube videos – than it is for people who were public figures before they had a YouTube presence (29%). A similar pattern holds for merchandise sales.

Most independent channels solicit some form of donations on their channel

% of popular YouTube news channels that accept at least one type of donation



Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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YouTubers may be adopting these tools at such high rates as much to build a following as to pull in revenue. For example, member perks like digital badges can appear in user comments, helping promote that membership to other viewers. And the survey component of this study suggests that this may be effective. YouTube news consumers who often get news from YouTubers are far more likely than those who get news from YouTube less frequently to say they have a sense of loyalty to a few YouTube channels (61% vs. 28%).

These practices also may lead to more attention to a channel's videos. Channels that accept donations or offer privileges to those who donate tend to get far more views than those that do not – and the more views on a video, the more potential ad revenue.

Overwhelming majority of popular YouTube news channels connect with their audiences on multiple platforms

Most channels use multiple avenues to reach potential audiences outside of YouTube. While YouTube news channels also can be discovered through the YouTube recommendation engine or search, those tools are outside the control of the channel creator and do not extend beyond the platform.

To determine whether a channel used these external tools, researchers looked for any social media or other links on that channel's YouTube page. About nine-in-ten (89%) popular YouTube news channels use at least one other social media platform. Most have a Twitter (84%) or Facebook (76%) account, and about half are on Instagram (52%). A majority (72%) also have a website, while 13% have an accompanying podcast and 8% have a mobile app. Only 6% do not have a presence on any other platform.

Nearly all YouTube news channels reach their audiences on multiple platforms

% of popular YouTube news channels that had a ...

	Social media account	Website	Podcast	Mobile app
All YouTube news channels	89%	72%	13%	8%
News org. channels	95	96	13	17
Other org. channels	91	91	14	*
Independent channels	82	41	13	*

Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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Examining videos from the most viewed YouTube news channels: Videos about Trump stood out as especially popular in December 2019

To better understand what kind of news was being covered by news channels on YouTube, researchers further examined 2,967 videos from December 2019, all published during the month by the top 100 of the 377 channels studied and ranked by how many views their typical (median) video received.

[BOX: Examining videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels]

Of the 377 news channels included in this study that had at least 100,000 subscribers as of December 2019, 89% posted at least one video in December 2019. From this subset of channels, researchers excluded local news channels and then selected the top 100 channels based on how many views their typical (median) video received that month. Through this process, researchers arrived at a selection of news channels that produce videos that pertain to national or international current events and typically receive a substantial number of views.

Researchers then examined a sample of each channel's videos from December 2019. With the exception of a handful of extremely prolific channels that produced too many videos to examine in their entirety, this sampling process included most or all of the videos that each channel produced during the month. Altogether, 3,626 videos were examined and then subsequently weighted to be representative of the full collection of videos. Nearly one-in-five of these videos (18%) were not about news or current affairs and were excluded from this analysis, resulting in a final sample of 2,967 videos. The first 10 minutes of each video (or, if the video was shorter than 10 minutes, the entire video) in this final sample was watched by a human researcher and coded for a range of characteristics, including its primary topic, the person or group it focused on, its tone, the number of views it received in its first week and the sources it cited.

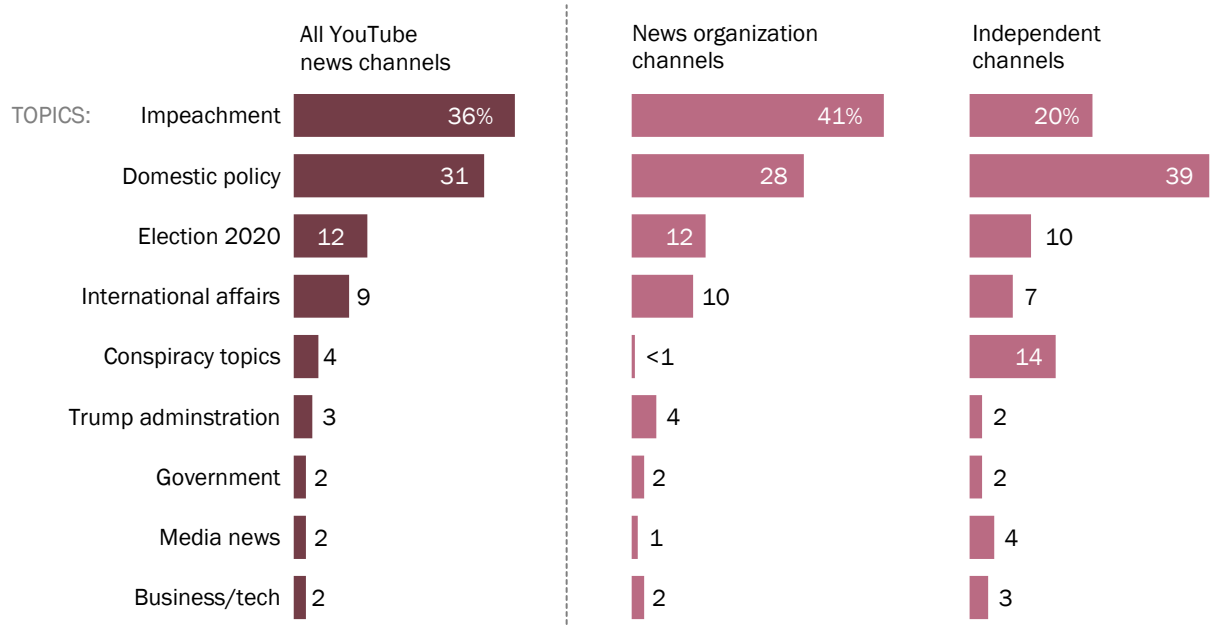
[/BOX]

This analysis finds that roughly a third of videos from the most viewed YouTube news channels in December 2019 (36%) were primarily about President Trump's impeachment, while 31% pertained to a range of domestic policy issues such as gun control, abortion or immigration. Other topics included the 2020 election (12%), international affairs (9%), criticism of corporations such as big tech (2%), the news media (2%) and conspiracy theories like QAnon (2%).

Not only were videos about Trump's impeachment especially common during this period, but they also averaged nearly twice as many views as videos about domestic issues (245,000 vs. 128,000), the second most common topic. The only topic that generated greater viewership was President Trump himself, outside the context of his impeachment. Even though just 3% of the news videos were about Trump and his administration generally (not specifically impeachment), these videos averaged 257,000 views.

About a third of the most viewed YouTube news videos from December 2019 were about Trump's impeachment

% of videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels that were primarily about ...



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Channels affiliated with other organizations (aside from news organizations) produced just 2% of videos, which was not enough to analyze separately.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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Collectively, channels associated with news organizations tended to produce more videos on the impeachment inquiry, while independent channels concentrated more on domestic issues. About four-in-ten (41%) of videos produced by news organizations primarily covered the impeachment inquiry, about double the proportion produced on this topic by independent channels (20%).[9] In contrast, nearly four-in-ten videos produced by independent YouTube news channels (39%) covered domestic policy issues, while a smaller portion of the videos produced by news organizations (28%) did so.

Although videos were analyzed for their primary topic, certain storylines cut across a broad range of issues and came up regularly even in videos that were primarily about other topics. In addition to assessing each video's main topic, the study also looked at whether a video made any mention at all of two topics that were uniquely prominent during the study period: Trump's impeachment and the 2020 election. Nearly half of the videos (47%) mentioned the impeachment inquiry and about a quarter (26%) mentioned the 2020 election at least in passing, even if it was not the main topic of the video.

[9] Channels that were affiliated with other organizations (aside from news outlets) produced 2% of the videos included in this part of the analysis, and therefore are not analyzed separately. As a result, this section mostly discusses differences between channels owned by news organizations and independent channels.

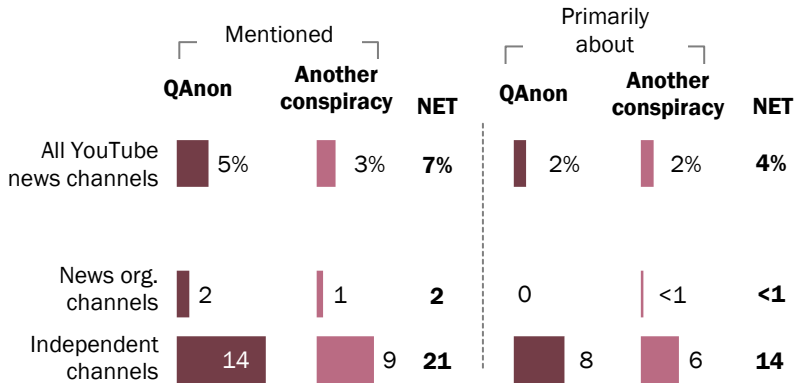
Videos about conspiracy theories almost entirely concentrated among independent channels

Researchers examined whether videos produced by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels in December 2019 were primarily about – or at least mentioned – a set of specific conspiracy theories that were prominent in the news media in late 2019, particularly QAnon/deep state conspiracy theories, theories related to Jeffrey Epstein and anti-vaccine theories.[10]

The analysis found that 7% of the videos mentioned at least one of these conspiracy theories at all, and 4% were primarily about a conspiracy theory. QAnon was the most common conspiracy theory discussed. It was mentioned in 5% of the videos and was the main topic of 2%.

Independent channels covered QAnon conspiracy theories much more frequently than news organizations did

% of videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels from December 2019 that mentioned or primarily were about ...



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Videos may mention more than one conspiracy, but can only be primarily about one topic. Channels affiliated with other organizations (aside from news organizations) produced just 2% of videos, which was not enough to analyze separately.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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On some types of channels, however, conspiracy theories were mentioned much more regularly. Fewer than 1% of the videos produced by channels that are affiliated with a news organization were about a conspiracy theory, and just 2% of these channels' videos mentioned any of these theories at all. By contrast, 14% of the videos that were produced by independent channels – those not affiliated with any larger organization – were dedicated to covering conspiracy theories, and roughly one-in-five (21%) of their videos mentioned a conspiracy theory at least briefly. In other

[10] To analyze conspiracy theories, researchers selected these specific theories by looking at previous Pew Research Center work and news media coverage and then trained coders on how to recognize these theories. Coders determined if a video was about or mentioned a conspiracy theory only if the conspiracy theory was mentioned by name or central tenets of the theory were discussed. Researchers did not attempt to determine if the video was supporting or promoting the theory. In cases where a conspiracy theory outside this list was discussed, coders discussed the theory with the lead researcher, who investigated whether the ideas were connected to a conspiracy theory.

words, coverage of conspiracy theories was almost entirely concentrated among videos from independent channels, and virtually absent in videos produced by channels affiliated with news organizations.

The same pattern holds for videos specifically covering the set of conspiracy theories known as QAnon. These theories were mentioned in 14% of videos published by independent channels, compared with 2% of those from news organization channels, and was the primary topic in 8% of videos from independent channels and fewer than 1% of news organizations' videos.

Roughly a quarter of YouTube news videos focused on Trump; these videos tended to be more popular

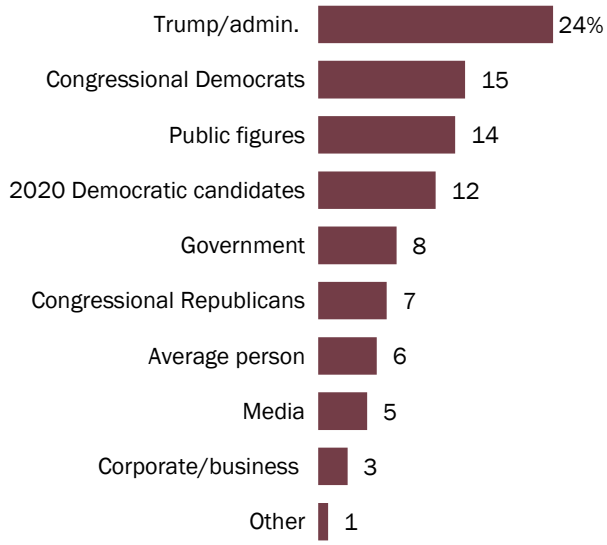
In addition to categorizing a news video's primary topic, researchers also noted whether a video focused on a specific entity, organization or person (the primary character in the video). Conceptually, a video's focus is distinct from its topic. For example, while videos that were about Trump's impeachment often focused on Trump himself, some focused on other figures involved in the impeachment proceedings. Similarly, many videos that focused on Trump were about the impeachment proceedings, but others focused on the president in the context of his administration more generally, domestic issues, and other topics.

Nearly all of the videos examined (95%) had a clear focus, and the most common focus was President Trump. About a quarter (24%) of all videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels focused on Trump. Smaller shares focused on other figures, like non-political public figures (14%), Democratic presidential candidates (12%) and Democratic members of Congress (15%).

Videos that focused on Trump were notably more popular than those that focused on other people or organizations, or none at all. Trump-focused videos received over 220,000 views, on average, compared with an average of 157,000 views among all other videos. While most of these videos were topically related to Trump's impeachment, videos that were about Trump in other contexts also received high numbers of

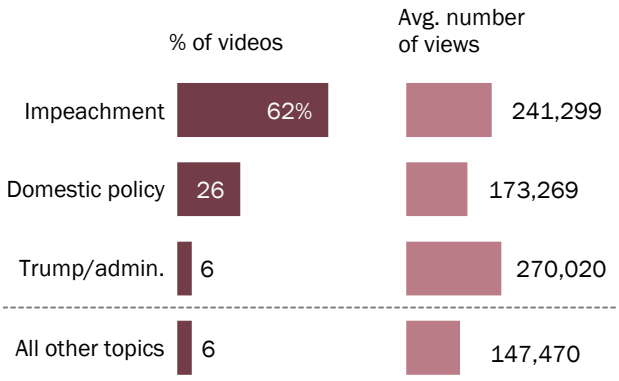
About a quarter of all videos studied focused on President Trump ...

% of videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels from December 2019 that focused on ...



... and these videos were mostly about impeachment

Among all news videos that focused on President Trump



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Congressional Democrats/Republicans may include other prominent party figures. Categories are mutually exclusive. Videos without a focus not shown.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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views. Of the videos that focused on Trump, 62% were related to his impeachment, and these videos averaged about 241,000 views. However, 6% were about other aspects of Trump or his administration, and these received even more views (roughly 270,000, on average).

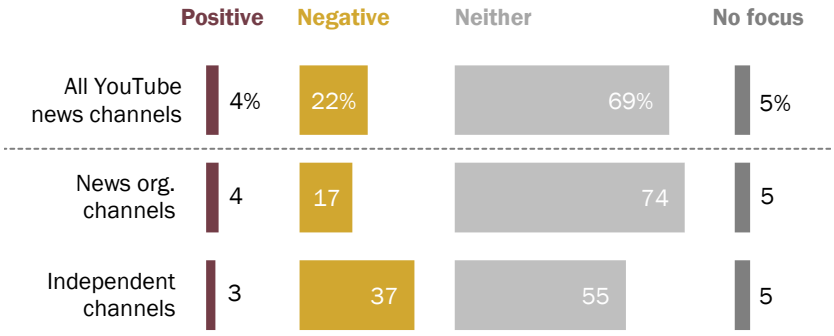
Much of the focus on Trump appears to have been driven by news organizations, rather than independent channels. Collectively, news organizations focused on Trump in 28% of their videos – about twice the rate of independent channels, who focused on Trump in just 12% of their videos overall.

Negative YouTube news videos were more common than positive ones and received more views, but most were neither negative nor positive

While watching the videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels, researchers also assessed whether each video took a decidedly negative or positive tone toward the person or group it primarily discussed. Videos were considered to have a negative tone if at least twice as many negative statements as positive ones were made about the primary person or group being discussed during the video's first 10 minutes.[11] Similarly, when statements about a video's primary character were predominantly positive (at least 66% of all mentions), the video was determined to be positive. All other videos were coded as neither positive nor negative (sometimes referred to as "mixed").

Independent YouTube channels about twice as likely as news organizations to produce videos with a negative tone

% of videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels from December 2019 that had a ___ tone toward the main person or group they addressed



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Videos coded as positive had at least twice as many positive as negative statements; negative videos had at least twice as many negative as positive statements. All other videos are coded as neither. Channels affiliated with other organizations (aside from news organizations) produced 2% of videos, which was not enough to analyze separately.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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Most of the news videos published by these channels were neither positive nor negative – 69% were either mixed in their tone or took a neutral stance toward the main person or group they discussed. But negative videos still outnumbered positive videos by about five-to-one. Roughly one-in-five (22%) videos took a negative tone toward their main subject, compared with just 4% that had a positive tone. An additional 5% of videos had no focus at all.

[11] To determine tone, researchers considered the tone of all statements about the person or group being discussed. Factual statements that cast that person or group in a negative or positive light were not included unless the critique or praise extended beyond the facts themselves. For instance, a statement describing a poll showing a low approval rating would not be considered a negative statement because it is reporting a fact.

Independent channels were more than twice as likely to publish negative videos: 37% of the videos produced by independent channels took a negative tone toward their primary focus, compared with just 17% of the videos that were produced by channels affiliated with news organizations. In contrast, videos from both types of channels rarely had a positive tone.

Negativity also seemed to drive viewership – or, on the other side of the coin, positivity was less effective at capturing an audience's attention. Videos that were predominantly negative in tone received an average of 184,000 views, somewhat higher than videos that had a mixed or neutral tone, which averaged 172,000 views. On the other hand, videos with a positive tone received notably fewer views, with 117,000, on average. This pattern was reflected in videos that were produced by both types of channels – news organizations and independent channels alike.

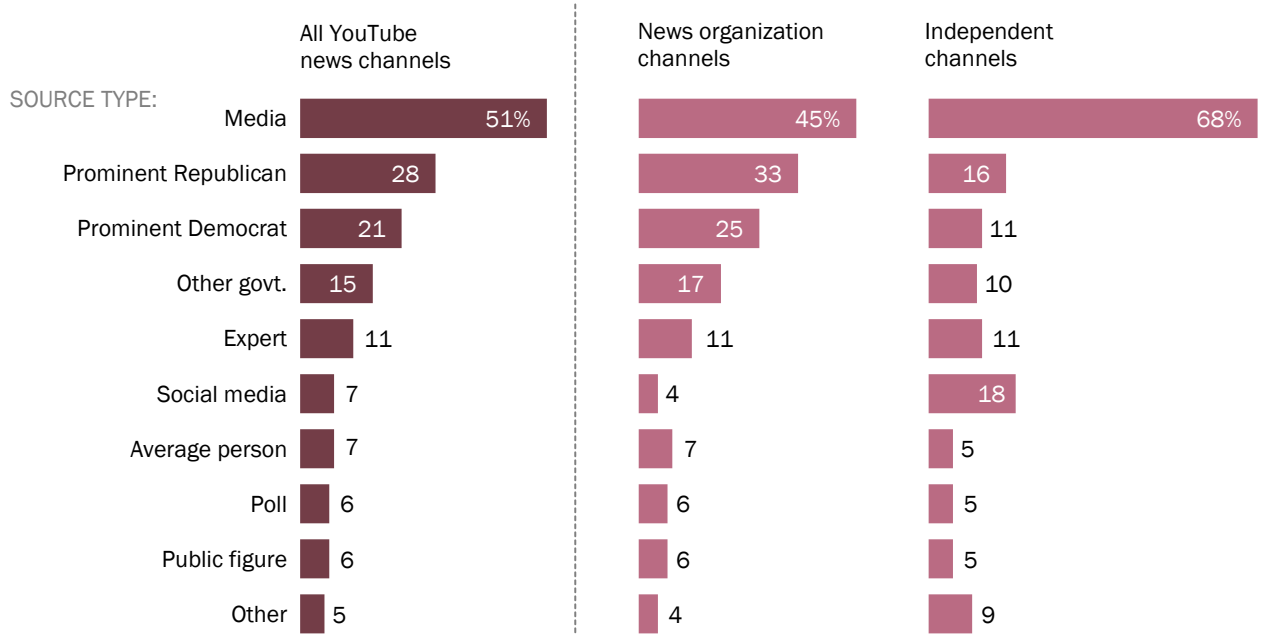
YouTube news videos included the news media as source more than any other source type

These videos cited a wide variety of sources in their reporting, with media the most commonly cited source type (only external media citations were included; for example, a video produced by NBC and citing another NBC clip or statements of their own reporters were not counted, but if NBC included a clip from CBS it would be). About half of the videos studied from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels in December 2019 cited the media (51%), showing that it is common for YouTube news videos to rely on previously reported material.

YouTube news videos also commonly cited prominent political figures (42%). Among political figures, Republicans were cited in slightly more videos than Democrats (28% vs. 21%), while a smaller portion of videos cited nonpartisan government entities (15%). Some videos also cited experts (11%), social media posts (7%), average people (7%), public figures (6%) or polls (6%).

YouTube news videos cited media more often than other types of sources; independent channels less likely to cite officials

% of videos from the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels from December 2019 that cited each source type



Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. A video may cite multiple types of sources, but each source type is mutually exclusive. Channels affiliated with other organizations (aside from news organizations) produced 2% of videos, which was not enough to analyze separately.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
"Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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Channels associated with news organizations and those that are independent displayed different tendencies when citing sources. Roughly two-thirds (68%) of videos from independent channels cited media, compared with fewer than half (45%) of videos from news organizations. Videos from independent channels were also considerably more likely than those from news organizations to cite social media sources (18% vs. 4%).

With their tendency to turn to media, and with generally fewer production capabilities, independent channels were less likely to cite elected officials than news organization channels. Videos produced by independent channels were about half as likely to cite Republicans, including President Trump and members of Congress. Just 16% of videos from independent channels did so, compared with a third (33%) of videos produced by news organizations. There was a similar pattern for citing Democrats, including members of Congress and presidential candidates, although these source types were cited less frequently overall (25% of videos from news organizations vs. 11% of videos from independent channels).

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Methodology

This report – a study of news on YouTube – uses three different research components and methodologies, including a national representative survey of U.S. adults conducted through Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (ATP) and a content analysis of YouTube channels and the news videos they produced.

Survey

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report are drawn from the panel wave conducted January 6 to January 20, 2020. A total of 12,638 panelists responded out of 15,463 who were sampled, for a response rate of 82%. This does not include nine panelists who were removed from the data due to extremely high rates of refusal or straightlining. The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 5.3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged onto the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 12,638 respondents is plus or minus 1.3 percentage points.

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	2,315
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	1,337
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	685
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS/web	9,396	8,778	6,421
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS/web	5,900	4,720	4,705
	Total	**35,014**	**23,440**	**15,463**

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel.

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The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of which 9,942 agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a random, address-based sample (ABS) of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. In each household, the adult with the next birthday was asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. For a random half-sample of invitations, households without internet access were instructed to return a postcard. These households were contacted by telephone and sent a tablet if they agreed to participate. A total of 9,396 were invited to join the panel, and 8,778 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. The same recruitment procedure was carried out on August 19, 2019, from which a total of 5,900 were invited to join the panel and 4,720 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. Of the 23,440 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 15,463 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90%range.[12]

[12] AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling."

Weighting

The ATP data was weighted in a multistep process that begins by calibrating the entire panel so that it aligns with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table to create a full-panel weight. For ATP waves in which only a subsample of panelists are invited to participate, a wave-specific base weight is created by adjusting the full-panel weights for subsampled panelists to account for any differential probabilities of selection for the particular panel wave. For waves in which all active panelists are invited to participate, the wave-specific base weight is identical to the full-panel weight. The next step in the weighting uses an iterative technique that aligns the sample to population benchmarks on the dimensions listed in the accompanying table.

Sampling errors and test of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender Age Education Race/Hispanic origin Country of birth among Hispanics Home internet access	2018 American Community Survey
Region x Metropolitan status	2019 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total U.S. adult population.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	12,638	1.3 percentage points
YouTube news consumers	2,872	2.8 percentage points
YouTube news videos are ___ way I get news		
The most important	322	8.3 percentage points
An important way, but not the most important	1,655	3.7 percentage points
Not an important	884	5.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

Content analysis of YouTube news channels and videos

Overview

To better understand the news content people are exposed to in YouTube, this part of the study analyzed 377 popular YouTube channels that primarily produced videos about news and current affairs and 2,967 news videos produced by a subset of the most-viewed 100 of these channels.

YouTube news channels selection

News channels were identified by adapting a mapping method from prior Pew Research Center research that used a set of seed channels and YouTube video recommendations to iteratively find related channels. Researchers started with an initial list of 145 channels compiled from multiple lists of news channels on YouTube, including:[13]

1. 81 channels associated with news organizations that were included in Pew Research Center's 2019 State of the News Media report;

2. 26 channels that had at least 250,000 subscribers as of December 2018, and that talked about U.S. news, politics, or current events in at least half their videos during the first week of 2019;

3. 70 news channels that were shared on Twitter by at least five different respondents in a nationally representative survey conducted June 10, 2018, through June 9, 2019 (for more information about this survey, see its methodology); and

4. YouTube's aggregate "News" channel, which provides a feed of videos that YouTube has marked as news from across channels.

Researchers used this list of 145 channels to find more channels via YouTube's recommendation engine in order to capture as many channels as possible that could offer news content to YouTube users. To do so, researchers used an iterative process, with the output of one process used as the seed channels for a second iteration of the process. This expanded the pool of potential news channels.

For each channel, researchers ran a script in November 2019 to query the YouTube API for lists of recommended videos for each of the channel's most recent videos. The script was not logged into a YouTube account in an effort to minimize personalized recommendations. Researchers then

[13] Some channels were found on multiple lists.

removed channels that had fewer than 100,000 subscribers and used two different methods to identify and remove non-English channels. First, researchers used a Python script to remove any channel in which more than 50% of its title and description did not use English language (non-ASCII) characters – common for foreign language channels. Second, researchers used the langdetect Python package to identify channels whose title and description were in English. This package reports the probability that text is in a given language, and any channels whose title and descriptions were found to have less than a 50% probability of being in English were excluded.

Once a list of recommended channels was collected, researchers determined whether these channels primarily published videos about politics and current event news. To do so, human coders visited the "Videos" tab of each channel in November 2019 and considered the title and featured image for each of its 15 most recent videos. A channel was included if at least half of those videos were about political news or current affairs and not solely focused on non-political conspiracies, lifestyles, reviews, or other non-news or current affairs content. Channels that were mostly documentaries were also excluded.

The channels discovered using these recommendation and filtering processes were then used as a new set of seed channels, and the whole process was repeated with these seed channels.

After running the recommendation and filtering processes twice, human coders had examined 17,797 channels and identified a final total of 377 popular channels with at least 100,000 subscribers that primarily published videos about news or current affairs in November 2019.

Channel audit

Next, researchers conducted an analysis of key characteristics of those 377 channels. This audit investigated key components of each channel's identity, community and fundraising.

Coders were given multiple sets of YouTube channels to evaluate during the training period. Once internal agreement on how to code the variables was established, coding of the channels for the study began. Agreement was tested using Fleiss's Kappa, a common intercoder reliability measure for multiple coders (five coders were trained but only two conducted this phase of the research because of the smaller number of channels; the scores below are the agreement between those two). The mean Kappa across variables was 0.89, with a minimum of 0.79 ("Affiliation") and several variables showing full agreement.

Below are the main measures and their Kappas (minimum and average reported for variables with multiple, non-exclusive options, like select alls):

- Digital platform – 0.73 or higher (average is 0.93)
- Ideology – 0.88
- Donation type – 0.65 or higher (average is 0.82)
- Donation privileges – 1.0
- Merchandise – 1.0
- Personality driven – 0.82
- Affiliation – 0.79

Upon reaching an acceptable level of intercoder reliability, all channels were coded by two coders.

Throughout the coding process, staff discussed questions as they arose and arrived at decisions under supervision of the content analysis team leader. In addition, the lead researcher checked coders' accuracy throughout the process.

Video coding

Throughout December 2019, researchers collected every video that was produced by each of the 377 popular news channels; 89% of the channels posted at least one video during the month, and each video was tracked for a week after its publication to collect its 7-day view count and other measures.

Overall, the 377 news channels produced 37,095 videos in December 2019. Due to time considerations and the sheer volume of videos, researchers were only able to examine and analyze videos that were produced by a subset of the 377 popular news channels. Researchers focused on the 100 most-viewed news channels, which were selected by examining the views their typical (median) video received in December 2019. However, this still included some channels that did not primarily publish videos about news in December 2019 (although they had done so in November), and channels that were dedicated to local news. To ensure these weren't included in the sample, two researchers manually reviewed the titles and descriptions for the videos published by the top 100 channels and removed channels that focused on local news and channels that did not primarily publish videos about politics or current affairs during December 2019. These removed channels were then replaced with the next most-viewed candidates, and this process was repeated until researchers arrived at a final list of the 100 most-viewed national news channels, which collectively produced 4,864 videos during the month.

A set of five coders were then trained to evaluate these channels' videos across several metrics, including topic, focus, tone, and use of journalistic practices like sources.

Before training, codes for each variable were developed through an iterative process of identifying common elements. For example, for the conspiracy variable, researchers found several conspiracy theories or unproven claims that were prominently discussed in the news media in late 2019: QAnon/deep state conspiracy theories, theories related to Jeffrey Epstein and anti-vaccine theories. By looking at a sample of videos, researchers determined that QAnon- and Epstein-related theories were particularly common and trained coders to identify discussions of them based on the terms and tenets of the theories. Once trained, researchers coded for these conspiracy theories based on this information. However, researchers did not attempt to determine if the video was supporting or promoting the theory. In cases where a conspiracy theory outside this list was discussed, coders discussed the theory with the lead researcher, who investigated whether the ideas were connected to a conspiracy theory. However, after coding, it was clear that only QAnon was discussed regularly in these videos, so all other conspiracy theories were grouped into Other.

Fleiss's Kappa was also used to measure intercoder agreement. The mean Kappa across variables was a 0.7, with a minimum of 0.70 ("Focus") and a max of 0.82 ("News Focus").

Below are the main measures and their Kappas (minimum and average reported for variables with multiple, non-exclusive options, like select alls):

- News focus – 0.82
- Source type: 0.62 or higher (average is 0.75)
- Interview – 0.71
- Primary topic – 0.81
- Topic mentioned – 0.71 or higher (average is 0.81):
- Conspiracy – 0.79
- Focus – 0.70
- Tone – 0.71

Once coders were trained, researchers drew a representative, chronologically stratified sample of videos for each of the top 100 news channels using half-open random sampling. The number of videos sampled from each channel varied depending on the number of videos each channel produced in December 2019, but with the exception of a handful channels that produced a large number of videos (the most prolific of which was MSNBC, with 578 videos – 12% of the total), a channel's sample typically included most or all of the videos that it produced during the month.

Coders then examined each video in the sample. First, because many channels offered a mix of entertainment and news videos (even if most of their videos were about news), videos that were

determined to not be about news were removed from the sample and replaced with the next video, chronologically. This process was continued until a video that was about news was sampled.

Altogether, 3,626 videos produced by the top 100 news channels in December 2019 were sampled and classified. These videos were subsequently adjusted using channel-level propensity weights to be representative of the full collection of videos. About one-in-five (18%) of the sampled videos were not about current affairs and were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a final selection of 2,967 videos.

2020 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 59 JANUARY 2020
TOPLINE
JAN. 6 – JAN 20, 2020
TOTAL N=12,638

ASK ALL WITH INTERNET ACCESS (S_TABLETHH=0):
WEB1 Do you use any of the following social media sites? **[RANDOMIZE]**

BASED ON TOTAL	Yes, use this	No, do not use this[14]	No Answer
a. Twitter			
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020 [N=12638]	22	76	2
July 8–July 21, 2019 [N=5107]	23	76	1
b. Instagram			
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020 [N=12638]	37	62	1
July 8–July 21, 2019 [N=5107]	38	61	1
c. Facebook			
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020 [N=12638]	67	32	1
July 8–July 21, 2019 [N=5107]	71	29	*

[NO ITEM D]

e. YouTube			
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020 [N=12638]	71	28	1
July 8–July 21, 2019 [N=5107]	74	25	*

[NO ITEMS F-K]

ASK IF USES YOUTUBE [WEB1E=1) [N=9152]:
YTNEWS Do you ever get news from YouTube videos? By news we mean current events and issues.

BASED ON YOUTUBE USERS:	Yes	No	Refused
a. YouTube			
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	36	64	*

[14] Respondents who do not have internet access at home were excluded from the question; they are included here with those who said "No, do not use this." Respondents who do not have internet access were 4% of the sample in 2019 and 5% in 2020.

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:

YTNEWSIMP How important to you, if at all, are YouTube videos as a way of keeping up with the news?

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

13	The most important way
59	An important way, but not the most important
27	Not an important way
*	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:

YTNEWSONSITE Which statement describes how you most often get YouTube news videos?

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

65	Going directly to the YouTube app or website
34	Watching videos or following links that get shared with me on other platforms like Facebook or email
1	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:

YTACT How often, if at all, do you interact with YouTube news videos through actions like commenting, liking or disliking, subscribing, or sharing?

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

14	Often
31	Sometimes
30	Hardly ever
24	Never
*	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:

YTWATCHSTYLE When playing YouTube news videos, do you generally… **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

68	Pay close attention to news videos
31	Let news videos play in the background
1	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:

YTCHANNELLOYAL Which of the following statements comes closer to your view when it comes to YouTube news videos? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

38	I consider myself loyal to a few shows, people, or channels on YouTube
61	I am not particularly loyal to any shows, people, or channels on YouTube
1	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTNEWSOPIN Which statement comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?

I go to YouTube news videos primarily for… **[RANDOMIZE]**

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

51	Opinions, views, and social commentary
48	Information and facts
2	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTSOURCEATTN When you watch a YouTube news video, how much attention, if any, do you pay to who created the video?

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

39	A lot of attention
40	Some attention
14	Very little attention
6	No attention at all
1	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTNEWS2 When you watch news videos on YouTube, do you also watch the recommended news videos that appear alongside the video you are watching?

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020

11	Yes, regularly
67	Yes, on occasion
21	No
1	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTSOURCETYPE How often, if at all, do you get news on YouTube from… **[RANDOMIZE A-B]**

	Often	Sometimes	Hardly ever	Never	No Answer
a. News and media outlets on YouTube					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	23	52	19	6	*
b. YouTubers not affiliated with a news outlet					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	23	41	23	12	1

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTLIKE What is unique about YouTube as a place to get news? **[OPEN-END]**

BASED ON THOSE WHO PROVIDED AN ANSWER [N=2080]:

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	
18	Non-mainstream
17	Opinions/commentary
12	Variety
8	Fair/unbiased
6	News bites
7	Other content
15	Control
13	Convenience
7	Platform tools
7	TV alternative
2	Other features
10	Other
5	Nothing makes it unique/DK

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTINFORM Overall, would you say YouTube news videos … **[RANDOMIZE 1-2, 3 ALWAYS LAST]**

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	
66	Help you better understand current events
4	Make you more confused about current events
29	Have not made much of a difference
1	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTSKEP Which of the following best describes how you approach YouTube news videos, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**

I expect YouTube news videos will…

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	
73	Largely be accurate
24	Largely be inaccurate
3	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTRECSSAT How good of a job does YouTube do at recommending news videos for you?

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	
13	Very good
66	Somewhat good
15	Somewhat bad
4	Very bad

2	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:

YTNEWSPROBLEMS How much of a problem, if at all, do you think each of the following is when it comes to news on YouTube? **[RANDOMIZE]**

	A very big problem	A moderately big problem	A small problem	Not a problem at all	No Answer
a. Tone or civility of discussions about the news					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	13	28	37	19	2
b. Censorship by YouTube					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	29	26	28	16	2
c. YouTube limiting ad revenue for video creators, sometimes called demonetization					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	30	29	25	14	3
d. Harassment					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	19	24	34	20	2
e. Misinformation					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	30	33	27	9	1
f. Political bias					
Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	28	31	26	13	1

Now, thinking specifically about YouTube news videos focusing on politics or social issues…

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:

YTIDEO In general, would you describe the news videos about politics and social issues you see on YouTube as… **[SHOW OPTIONS IN REVERSE ORDER FOR RANDOM HALF OF SAMPLE]**

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	
3	Very conservative
11	Conservative
50	Moderate
24	Liberal
9	Very liberal
3	No answer

ASK IF GETS NEWS ON YOUTUBE (YTNEWS=1) [N=2872]:
YTNEWSLEARN In the past year, which political or social issue, if any, have you learned the most about from YouTube news videos? **[OPEN-END]**

BASED ON THOSE WHO PROVIDED AN ANSWER [N=1891]:

Jan 6-Jan 20, 2020	
20	Impeachment
3	Iran/Soleimani conflict
9	Other Trump admin.
3	Democratic primary 2020
5	Other U.S. govt.
4	Immigration
3	Science/tech
2	Identity topics
10	Other domestic policy
4	Media news
8	International
12	Other
15	Learned nothing/DK

Detailed tables

YouTube news channels, by affiliation

% of YouTube news channels that were affiliated with ...

	%	N
News organizations	**49**	**183**
TV stations/shows	22	84
Digital native news orgs.	14	52
Print publications	8	32
Radio & podcasts	2	8
Wire services	2	7
Other organizations	**9**	**35**
Independent	**42**	**159**

Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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YouTube news channels, by personality-orientation

% of YouTube news channels that were affiliated with ...

	Public figure	YouTuber	Not personality-driven
	%	%	%
All YouTube news channels	15	29	57
News org. channels	16	6	78
Other org. channels	20	17	63
Independent channels	13	57	30

Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019.
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YouTube news channels, by ideology

% of YouTube news channels that were affiliated with ...

	Left-leaning	Right-leaning	No ideology
	%	%	%
All YouTube news channels	4	8	88
News org. channels	4	4	92
Other org. channels	0	14	86
Independent channels	4	13	83

Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. “Other organization” channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. “Independent” channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. “Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side”

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YouTube news channels, by donation acceptance method

% of YouTube channels in each category that accepted donations via ...

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
At least one type	41	14	49	71
Patreon	27	6	11	55
YouTube membership	10	7	3	16
Cryptocurrency	6	2	3	11
Other (e.g., PayPal, Venmo, etc.)	27	9	34	46
None	59	86	51	29

Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019.
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YouTube news channels, by platform links

% of YouTube news channels in each category that linked to a ...

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
Social media	89	95	91	82
Website	72	96	91	41
Podcast	13	13	14	13
Mobile app	8	17	<1	<1
Other	30	33	14	31

Note: Popular YouTube news channels are those news channels that had at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019. "Other organization" channels are those affiliated with an external organization that is not a news organization, including government agencies, research organizations, and advocacy organizations. "Independent" channels do not have a clear external affiliation.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 377 YouTube news channels with at least 100,000 subscribers in November 2019.
"Many Americans Get News on YouTube, Where News Organizations and Independent Producers Thrive Side by Side"

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YouTube news videos, by topic

*% of videos produced by each type of channel that were **primarily about** ...*

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
Impeachment	36	41	32	20
Domestic policy	31	28	54	39
Election 2020	12	12	6	10
International	9	10	1	7
Conspiracy theories	4	<1	<1	14
Trump/admin.	3	4	<1	2
Government	2	2	2	2
Media news	2	1	4	4
Business/tech	2	2	<1	3

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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YouTube news videos, by mention of storyline

*% of videos produced by each type of channel that **mentioned** ...*

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
Impeachment	47	51	33	35
Election 2020	26	26	16	26

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019.
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YouTube news videos, by mention of conspiracy theory

*% of videos produced by each type of channel that **mentioned** ...*

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
QAnon	5	2	2	14
Another conspiracy theory	3	1	-	9
Any conspiracy theory	7	2	2	21
No conspiracy theory	93	98	98	79

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Videos may mention more than one conspiracy, but can only be primarily about one topic.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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YouTube news videos, by focus

*% of videos produced by each type of channel that were **primarily focused on ...***

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
Trump/admin.	24	28	10	12
Congressional Democrats	15	14	16	17
Public figures	14	14	8	16
2020 Democratic candidates	12	12	5	11
Government	8	7	11	9
Congressional Republicans	7	7	6	6
Average person	6	5	17	8
Media	5	4	8	9
Business/tech	3	3	0	3
YouTube	< 1	< 1	0	1
Other	1	1	1	1
No focus	5	1	16	5

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Congressional Democrats/Republicans may include other prominent party figures. Categories are mutually exclusive.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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YouTube news videos, by tone

% of videos produced by each type of channel that had a ___ tone ...

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
Positive	4	4	6	3
Negative	22	17	17	37
Neither positive / negative	69	74	61	55
No focus	5	5	16	5

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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YouTube news videos, by sources cited

% of videos produced by each type of channel that cited ...

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
	%	%	%	%
Media	51	45	48	68
Prominent Republican	28	33	18	16
Prominent Democrat	21	25	5	11
Other govt.	15	17	12	10
Expert	11	11	14	11
Social Media	7	4	1	18
Average person	7	7	11	5
Public figure	6	6	9	5
Poll	6	6	2	5
Other	5	4	1	9
None	8	7	16	9

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Categories are mutually exclusive.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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YouTube news video views, by topic

*Number of views on average on videos produced by each type of channel that were **primarily about** ...*

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
Impeachment	244,663	261,581	82,069	163,869
Domestic policy	128,311	138,032	209,515	98,097
Election 2020	107,733	105,422	58,361	119,004
International	107,111	103,325	24,559	125,108
Trump/admin.	256,767	272,367	-	153,891
Government	156,052	170,086	28,513	130,462
Media news	133,143	130,614	22,666	145,083
Business/tech	184,497	217,333	-	118,546
QAnon conspiracy theories	112,529	-	-	112,529

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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YouTube news video views, by focus

*Number of views received on videos produced by each type of channel that were **primarily focused on ...***

	All YouTube news channels	News org. channels	Other org. channels	Independent channels
Trump/admin.	220,501	236,055	32,831	124,692
Congressional Democrats	204,495	237,343	167,234	126,999
Average person	131,269	130,781	209,596	118,594
2020 Democratic candidates	105,960	102,665	167,234	118,418
Media	150,996	178,433	70,012	122,637
Congressional Republicans	219,576	230,695	127,841	186,487
Business/tech	163,164	179,350	-	111,962
YouTube	156,646	290,017	-	86,190
Government	161,006	189,238	109,805	101,087
Public figures	122,010	125,050	217,639	110,363
Other	266,056	339,813	251,474	80,513
No focus	112,646	121,254	171,648	69,203

Note: Most viewed YouTube news channels are those news channels with the highest number of median views on their videos from December 2019. Congressional Democrats/Republicans may include other prominent party figures.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2,967 videos published in December 2019 by the 100 most viewed YouTube news channels.
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